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THE

POEMS

OF

JOHN RUSKIN:

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NOW FIRST COLLECTED FROM ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT AND PRINTED SOURCES; AND EDITED, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, WITH NOTES, BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

BY

W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

00052435

WITH FACSIMILES OF MSS. AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR.

VOLUME II.

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH;

1836—1845:

AND LATER POEMS.

9x-i-15a

GEORGE ALLEN
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AND
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POEMS.

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CHAMOUNI.

CONTENTS.

** Pieces now printed for the first time.*

1836; Age 17.

	PAGE
Song from "Leoni, a Romance of Italy"	3
*Jacqueline	4
On Adele, by Moonlight	6
The Last Smile	7
Good-Night	8
*Swiss Maiden's Song	10
*Alpine-Glow	12
*The Iris	13
*A Letter to his Father	14
*The Alpine Lake	21
*Congratu—	22
*Evening in Company	25
*On Adele: "Her sisters' words were soft and low"	27
*Nature Untenanted: "With fingers light the lingering breezes quiver"	29
*Song: "In winter thou camest"	31
*Characters from "Marcolini"	32
*Mont Blanc	34
*A Rhyming Letter	36

1837; Age 17–18.

The Gipsies	43
The Scythian Grave	61
Remembrance	64
Christ Church, Oxford	66

1838; Age 18–19.

PAGE

The Exile of St. Helena 71
The Recreant 85
The Wreck 87
Aristodemus at Platæa 89
Song: "We care not what skies are the clearest" . . . 92
Song: "Though thou hast not a feeling for one" . . . 94
Horace: "Iter ad Brundusium" 96
Memory: "The summer wind is soft and kind" . . . 97
The Name 99
Canzonet: "The winter's chill hath charmed the wave" . . 102
Fragment from a Meteorological Journal 104
Canzonet: "There's a change in the green of the leaf" . . 106
The Mirror 107
Song of the Tyrolese after the Battle of Brixen . 109
A Scythian Banquet-Song 111

1839; Age 19–20.

Salsette and Elephanta; A Newdigate Prize Poem . 129
The Scythian Guest 142
Farewell 151
The Broken Chain 166

1840; Age 21.

To Adele: "That slow and heavy bell hath knolled" . . 239
The Tears of Psammenitus 244
The Two Paths 253
The Old Water-Wheel 255
The Departed Light 257
Agonia 259

1841; Age 22.

The Last Song of Arion 263
The Hills of Carrara 273

1842; AGE 23.

PAGE
CHARITIE 279

1843; AGE 24.

THE BATTLE OF MONTENOTTE 285
A WALK IN CHAMOUNI 295

1844; AGE 25.

LA MADONNA DELL' ACQUA 301
THE OLD SEAMAN 303
THE ALPS, SEEN FROM MARENGO 306

1845; AGE 26.

MONT BLANC REVISITED 311
THE ARVE AT CLUSE 313
MONT BLANC: "He who looks upward from the vale by night" 315
LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE BASSES ALPES 317
THE GLACIER 319

APPENDIX.

POEMS AND FRAGMENTS OF LATER YEARS—
LUCERNE FLOODED 323
LITTLE PIGS 324
*AWAKE, AWAKE! 326
*TWIST YE, TWINE YE 328
RHYMES FOR MUSIC—
*I. "JOANNA'S CARE" 330
*II. THE SONG IN THE QUEEN'S PARLOUR . . 330
*III. THE SONG OF THE QUEEN'S GARDEN; NAUSICAA 330
*IV. TRUST THOU THY LOVE 331
ADDITIONAL STANZAS TO "DAME WIGGINS OF LEE" . 332
THE PULPIT 334

APPENDIX—*Continued.*

PAGE

RHYMES FOR MUSIC—

*V. NURSERY DRILL 335
*VI. LAWN TENNIS INTERRUPTED 335
*VII. RED-RIDING-HOOD 336
*VIII. TEA IN THE SCHOOLROOM 336
*IX. ST. PETER 336
*X. THE ANSWER, TO BABY 337

EDITOR'S NOTES—

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA 339
NOTES TO THE POEMS 346

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOLUME II.

CHAMOUNI	*Frontispiece*	
MONT BLANC DE ST. GERVAIS, FROM ST. MARTIN	*To face page*	12
AT DULWICH	„	36
RYDAL-WATER	„	92
SUNSET AT BAVENO	„	175
AMBOISE	„	223
MILL AT BAVENO	„	255
AT CARRARA	„	273
THE COAST OF GENOA	„	292
THE GLACIER DES BOIS	„	295
THE VALLEY OF CLUSE	„	313
GLACIER DES BOSSONS	„	319

1836.

AT 16-17 YEARS OF AGE.

Song from "Leoni, a Romance of Italy" [*About January*].

Jacqueline [*About January*].

On Adele, by Moonlight [*About January*].

The Last Smile [*About February*].

Good-Night [*About February*].

Swiss Maiden's Song [*February or March*].

Alpine-Glow [*About March—May*].

The Iris [*About March*].

A Letter to his Father (*March* 31).

The Alpine Lake [*May*].

Congratu—— (*May* 10).

Evening in Company (*May* 18).

On Adele. "Her Sisters' Words were Soft and Low."

Nature Untenanted. "With Fingers Light the Lingering Breezes Quiver." (*Richmond, July*).

Song:—"In Winter Thou Camest" [*Summer*].

Characters from "Marcolini" [*Summer*].

Mont Blanc.

A Rhyming Letter from Oxford (*October*).

SONG.

[FROM "LEONI, A ROMANCE OF ITALY."]

FULL broad and bright is the silver light
Of moon and stars on flood and fell;
But in my breast is starless night,
For I am come to say farewell!
How glad, how swift, was wont to be
The step that bore me back to thee!
Now coldly comes upon my heart
The meeting that is but to part.

I do not ask a tear; but while
I linger where I must not stay,
Oh! give me but a parting smile,
To light me on my lonely way;
To shine, a brilliant beacon star,
To my reverted glance, afar,
Through midnight, which can have no morrow,
O'er the deep, silent surge of sorrow!

[*About January.*]

JACQUELINE.

SHE wanders on, the darkening forest through,
By glancing snow, by glacier cold and blue;
By sunny rock, by Alpine pasture green,
She wanders onward still, poor Jacqueline!
The storm is up, the tempest wreathes the hill,
But Jacqueline is on the mountain still;
And the lone shepherd sees her flitting by,
With pale, cold cheek, and darkly startled eye,
And still she flings, the mountain air along,
The moaning burden of an ancient song;
Her voice is low and sweet, and thus sings she:—
"Return again, my love, return to me!"
She seeks for one who left his cottage-door
As morning dawned, but who returned no more.
The torrent sang his requiem long ago,
And round him wrapt a shroud of mountain snow.
Yet aye she listens, with quick ear, to greet
The cheerful tread of his returning feet;
Climbs with unwearied step, from day to day,
The mountain path by which he went away.
A changing, flickering fire that will not die,—
A sickened hope,—is in her restless eye;

A hope, that sits in reason's vacant throne.
And still she wanders o'er the wild alone.
And plaintive breezes hear, in drifting by,
Her low, melodious, melancholy cry;
For still she sings, with gentle voice sings she;—
"Return again, my love, return to me!"

[*About January.*]

ON ADELE, BY MOONLIGHT.

WITH what a glory and a grace
The moonbeam lights her laughing face,
And dances in her dazzling eye;
As liquid in its brilliancy
As the deep blue of midnight ocean,
When underneath, with trembling motion,
The phosphor light floats by!

And blushes bright pass o'er her cheek,
But pure and pale as is the glow
Of sunset on a mountain peak,
Robed in eternal snow;
Her ruby lips half oped the while,
With careless air around her throwing,
Or, with a vivid glance, bestowing
A burning word, or silver smile.

[*About January.*]

THE LAST SMILE.

SHE sat beside me yesternight,
With lip and eye so sweetly smiling,
So full of soul, of life, of light,
So beautifully care-beguiling,
That she had almost made me gay,
Had almost charmed the thought away
(Which, like the poisoned desert wind,
Came sick and heavy o'er my mind),
That memory soon mine all would be,
And she would smile no more for me.

[*About February.*]

GOOD-NIGHT.

SHE lays her down in beauty's light,—
Oh, peaceful may her slumbers be!
She cannot hear my breathed "Good Night,"
I cannot send it o'er the sea;
And though my thoughts be fleet and free
To fly to her with speed excelling,
They cannot speak—she cannot see—
Those constant thoughts around her dwelling.

Thou planet pale, thou plaintive star!
Adown whose light the dew comes weeping;
Thou shinest faint, but wondrous far;
Oh! surely thou behold'st her sleeping.
And though her eye thou canst not see
Beneath its archèd fringes shrouded,
Thou pallid star! 'tis well for thee
That such a lustre is beclouded.

Oh! haste thee then, thy rays are fleet,
And be thou, through her casement gleaming,
A starlight in her slumber sweet,
An influence of delightful dreaming.

Oh! is there no kind breeze to swell
Along thy silent looks of light,
And at her slumb'rous ear to tell
Who sent thee there to say "Good Night"?

[*About February.*]

SWISS MAIDEN'S SONG.

THE pines are tall, and dark, and wide;
The sunbeams through their branches glisten
Upon the mountain's turfy side,
Where cushion-moss is green around.
There, if you lie and listen,
A voice is heard, a soothing sound
Of waters underneath the ground.

It whispers still,—by day, by night;
The streamlet flows, I know not where,
By archèd rocks concealed from sight.
But still a gentle song you meet,—
A tinkling in the air
Rising up beneath your feet,
Soft, and low,—mysterious,—sweet.

'Tis like a voice of gentle tone
Within my heart, from day to day.
I'm by myself, but not alone;

For still it whispers, whispers there.
It always makes me gay:—
It talks of all things good or fair;
—It often talks of young Pierre.

[*February or March.*]

[ALPINE-GLOW.]

Oh, she was like the light of ruby red
By sinking sun on Alpine mountain shed;
A transient glow across its coldness cast,
A beaming glory far too bright to last;
That, fading, leaves a silence, deep and still,
A dreary darkness, and a hopeless chill.

Her voice has ceased to joy, her look to bless;
And she has left me in this loneliness.
And my deserted path's obscure, with shade
By the dark leaves of melancholy made.
But thou, dear Sun of memory, ever warrest
With the thick, tangled gloom of sorrow's forest:
And, for the brighest of thy beams, is cast
Her tearful look, the loveliest, and the last;
When she had waved the word she would not say,
Her dark eye glistened as she turned away:
And sickly smiled mine agony, to see
That first, last tear, she ever shed for me.

[*About March—May.*]

Mont Blanc de St. Gervais, from St. Martin.
1849

[THE IRIS.]

HAST thou not seen how the Iris is set,
Where the wings of the wind in the waters are wet?
On the rush of the falls, where the spray rises slowly;
Glorious and silent, like something most holy.

So fair in its colour, so faint in its light,—
So peacefully constant, so distantly bright,—
In the tumult of life, or the darkness of woe,
Is the memory of those we have loved long ago.

[*About March.*]

A LETTER TO HIS FATHER.

"Some little effort was made to pull me together in 1836 by sending me to hear Mr. Dale's lectures at King's College, where I explained to Mr. Dale, on meeting him one day at the court of entrance, that porticoes should not be carried on the top of arches; and considered myself exalted because I went in at the same door with boys who had square caps on. The lectures were on Early English Literature, of which, though I had never read a word of any before Pope, I thought myself already a much better judge than Mr. Dale. His quotation of 'Knut the king came sailing by' stayed with me; and I think that was about all I learnt during the summer." (*Præterita*, I. x.)

OH, such a day!—it would appear
The rainy days of all the year
Around the month of March do rally.
Oh, such a day!—the drifted rain
In stately columns stalks amain
Along the hills, and o'er the valley;
And dashes on the window-pane,
Like ocean-spray in surges driven.
The wind is high, and wild, and loud;
And thick and threatening comes the cloud
Across the scowling front of heaven;
They darken, darken more and more.
Before the blast the chimney shakes,
Which with a fitful force awakes

Its melancholy roar :
Then stills its thunder for a while.
There's not an organ-pipe more stern,
That shakes with sound the massive pile
And rolls along the columned aisle
Of beautiful Lucerne.
Oh, such a day I never knew !
The glass gone back, the sky looks black ;
My paper (and the quire's quite new !)
Don't it look confounded blue ?
Oh, how it makes one long to be
Beneath the sun of Italy.

Some eves ago, the moon was bright ;
It made me think of fairer night,
Where, all the glorious darkness through,
No cloud bedims the deepened blue ;
Where broad and bright the starlight smiles
Among the many marble isles
Of Ocean's loveliest, dearest daughter :
When o'er the mountains looks the moon
To glance along the green lagoon,
And on the distant, dashing water,
Whose bluely bending billows sweep,
And o'er the sandy hillocks roar
Where Israel's weary wanderers sleep
—Their requiem, the rushing deep—
On Lido's lengthy shore.
Alas ! the sky is not the sky,

Not half so blue, so calm, so high:
The stars about its concave strewn
Are not the stars of Trent at all!
The very moon is not the moon,
And does not look identical!
Oh, gladly would my mind digress
To rove amid the loveliness
Of mountain tall and valley low,
Where glaciers freeze or olives grow,
Or blossoms burst beneath the snow,
Or rocks arise, or aloes blow.
You, father, feel the yearning deep—
And vainly with the wish thou warrest—
To climb again the stormy steep,
And rove beneath the shadowy forest;
Or from the regions desolate,
Where tumbling torrents swirl and sweep,
And eagles sail, and chamois leap,
To seek the vale with vines elate,
Where orange glades hang greenly o'er
The living water's silent shore;
And from the fruitage golden glow,
And blossoms bright like stars illuming
Emerald leaf and bending bough,
Widely wafts the wind perfuming—
Loaded well the breezes blow.

But where in vision am I going?
Yon dash of sleet has broke my trance,

Revealing to my startled glance
The rushing rain that's swirling still
Along the ridge of Forest Hill;
And faster with the tempest blowing,
Amid the elemental rout,
Yon windmill flings its arms about.
Such is the scene which now I view
As I sit down to write to you,
In this last sheet, to end my tale
Of Lincoln's Inn and Mr. Dale,
And you'll excuse my change of measure—
In this I cannot write with ease or pleasure.

When, at the lesson's joyful termination,
We're in the passage, fixing our cravats on,
And slowly putting greatcoats, gloves, and hats on,
I get a little time for conversation
On various things with Messrs. Tom and Matson; *
Often discuss the business of the nation,
Abuse O'Connell; and we always feel
What a fine Orange orator is Peel.

Then, entering the coach,—the large, old brown,
For, (since the rain which from the heaven pours is
Likely to hurt our chariot) it of course is
Sent when it rains (that's always!) into town;

* "My fellow-scholars, the two sons of Mr. Dale, Tom and James; and the son of Colonel Matson of Woolwich." (*Præterita*, I. iv.)

Seating myself with my back to the horses,
My bag is on the seat beside set down;
As through the jolting streets we roll and bump on, I
Feel that my bag's excessively bad company.

It does not look a bag of any sense,—
A greenhorn of a bag! I think,—don't you?
A learned bag should always be a Blue,—
Deep blue! Under which colour of pretence,
When you return, I shall request a new
And more sagacious bag, of size immense.
I read at such a rate that there's no knowing
How many books I may require to stow in!

Nevertheless I'm very, very far
From utterly despising it, but grace
It with a very honourable place
Beside me, knowing what its contents are,—
Or opposite me, looking in my face,
Learned and grave, as Porson was, or Parr:
I then am rather tired and weary, or
Else I should take a look at its interior.

And by the church we go, my bag and I,
Which stately church, as far as I'm aware, is
Called,—not St. Clement's,—no, I think, St. Mary's;
A handsome spire it has, and wondrous high;
And from the courtyard of our college there is
A view of it, which I intend to try,

When once the weather shall be warm and fine,
For spring is coming, I suppose, in time.

Then by the road, the Waterloo, we go on
(That vile approach, which—isn't it a pity?
Adjoins the finest bridge in all the city),
And passing Walworth, Camberwell, and so on,
Come to our hill, which always looks so pretty,—
The wooden palings in a rural row on
Each side, and over them you cannot think
How sweetly almonds smile, and blush the peach-trees pink.

And then, as we drive in, comes barking out
Dash, with his noisy welcome boring us,
In exultation most uproarious.
Since painters have had pots of paint about,
His back is like the rainbow, glorious
With blue and green,—there's scarce a spot without
Some tint. I tell you this, lest you with conster-
Nation behold the many-coloured monster.

Thus I have furnished you with statement true
Of all the methods of acquiring Greek
And Latin, in the lessons thrice a week,
And all the various forms which I go through;
And when, instead of writing, I can speak,
I'll give you logical details, till you
Cry out, "What very stupid stuff is it!
I'll sleep! no more! that's *quantum sufficit!*"

'Twas in this stanza that I did intend
To terminate my letter, if I could.
How very difficult 'tis to conclude,—
From the high flight of rhyming to descend!
Either my endings are abrupt and rude,
Or else my poems never have an end.
I seldom find a stanza a real poser
Save that one which I wish to make the close, sir.

Then this will be a puzzling one, I know.
I want a rhyme; the first that comes I pop
Down, and my Muse's soaring wings I lop.
I wind my watch up when it will not go,
And wind my verse up when it will not stop!
I've three lines only to conclude in, so
You see that this, the next approaching line, is—
This very verse is positively

FINIS.

March 31.

[THE ALPINE LAKE.]

ON yonder mountain's purple crest
The earliest rays of morning rest;
  The latest lines of sunset linger,
When, at the portals of the west,
  The evening, with her misty finger,
Draws o'er the day her curtain grey
And twilight dimly dies away.

Beneath the shadow of the steep
The summer snows do coldly sleep;
  And there a little vale is made,
And a small water, still and deep,
  Within their clasping arms is laid,
Upward gazing on the sky
With its dark and silent eye.

And o'er the mountain, far and near,
There sits a sort of sacred fear:
  It is a place to be alone in,
And not a single sound you hear,
  Except a distant torrent's moaning,
That murmurs through the drowsy air
Like a bell that calls to prayer.

CONGRATU——

MY DEAREST FATHER,

WHEN I begin a poem, and intend on it
To spend some labour, 'tis my standard rule
To cogitate its title, and to bend on it
My thoughts, and utmost energies; for you'll
Observe, a stupid poem does depend on it,
Just as a person may respect a fool,
If he be Lord, or Baron, Duke, or Knight; all
Such things and people ought to have a title.

I did it here: the habit is inveterate:
(Although I hope my poem won't require it;
For if I think it does, I'll try to better it,
And with poetic fury to inspire it,—
Correct, erase, blot, polish, and ink-splutter it,
Till, even title-less, you should admire it:)
But then, what slightly did my thoughts confuse, I
Had not the smallest idea what the deuce I

Was going to say, to sing, or to indite.
I had not any plan of it, and that, you

Must know, is an impediment, and quite
A posing difficulty. Like a statue,
I sat, to think what title I should write.
You see, I got as far as this "Congratu—"
But at the "u" I stopped, in cogitation
If I might venture to put on the "—lation."

Congratulation! "Upon what?" thought I.
This birthday, sir, of yours, without a rhyme
You know, I never yet have let pass by.
But for Congratulation,—that old Time
Whips us away with whirlwind pinion,—why,
My poem might be moral, sage, sublime;
But not Congratulative. Sir, like smoke,
Our years fly off! By Jove, it is no joke!

Vainly the guests assemble round the board;
In vain the smile is seen on festive faces;
In vain the table is with dainties stored;
In vain its dish the stately sirloin graces;
In vain the health is drunk, the bumper poured;—
It cannot make us younger; and the case is
A bitter-ish one, at best. We feel it still;
And keep a birthday—as we gild a pill.

Our days, like cataracts swift, do whirl and whiz it
Down rocks of time, with speed which ne'er relaxes.
Oh, what a most unwelcome call,—the visit,
Which lays another year upon our back, is!

Yet, though the pertinacious day won't miss it,
(As punctual as a gatherer of taxes,)
Some palliation this of its offence is,
That, ending one year, it the next commences.

And gaily we'll commence it, as is meet:
Merrily send we the old year away.
With joy, and prayers of love, we come to greet
You early, in the dawning of the day.
And our good wishes, like an incense sweet,
Rise round the morning of the tenth of May,—
That many rolling suns, with lengthy blaze,
May shine on troops of decimated Mays!

May every May come dancing with a smile,
Health in her sun, and vigour in her breeze;
And at your feet her gifts profusive pile,—
Wealth and rejoicing, happiness and ease!
All that can joy bestow or care beguile,—
All you can wish,—be added unto these;
While still I hail them, as they come and go, in
My usual manner, with a little poem!

EVENING IN COMPANY.

1.

I HEAR thy name pronounced, Adèle,
With careless lip, and heartless tone:—
The vain magicians cannot tell
That they have roused a master-spell,—
A word of power, to them unknown,
Which widely opes the crystal portal
Of bygone moments, whence I see
A throne where Memory sits immortal,
And points to dreams of joy,—and thee!

2.

Chance sounds the changing breeze can fling
Across the harp, with fitful finger;
Or sweep the chords with wayward wing,
And on the quick-responsive string
Long and low vibrations linger.
They strike the chord; but I alone
Can hear the sounds in answer start;
With sweet delay that echoing tone
Rolls round the caverns of my heart.

3.

Within those caves there is no day,
And yet there is no darksome night:
For thy remembrance is a ray
Which never, never fades away
And fills them with its damp, cold light.
And through their halls a river rushes,
Deep and constant, clear and free;
In those beams its billow blushes,
And every wave's a thought of thee.

4.

Thy gentle name doth rend apart
The clouds of the forgetful veil,
That dims the heaven of my heart;
I dragged them there; they will depart;—
And lo! among the vapours pale
The inward sky looks mildly through
Unchanging, in whose silent sea
Of dark unfathomable blue
Burn countless stars—the thoughts of thee.

May 18.

[ON ADELE.]

HER sisters' words were soft and low,—
I could not guess what thoughts they brought her,
That o'er her mind came like the wind
Across the calm of waveless water.
But oh, her smile was like the light,—
So palely pure, so faintly bright,
Whose fitful flashes quivering cleave
The rosy clouds of summer-eve,
Which, on the glowing western sky
Do ope and close, and live and die.
Oh, how the blushing joys did skip
And burn about that laughing lip,
As changed her thought from grave to gay,
And trembled there with dear delay,
Or softly died, untraced, away.
Oh, dear Adèle, thy smiling sweet
Was of thyself an emblem meet:
Thou wast a smile, so bright, so brief,
It left the lips of life in grief.
Oh, dear Adèle, thy voice is now
Delighting other souls than mine;
Thy glancing eye and silver brow

On others look, for others shine!
And on my heart's deserted shore
Thou art a melody no more.
Yet, dear Adèle, my grieving breast
Is full of voices lowly singing—
Sweet, as the breezes of the west
The summer roses' odour bringing;—
Soft, as the moon on midnight waves,—
Strange, as the blossomings on graves,
Their darkness half-preventing;—
Sad, as the notes of plaintive breath
That the hurt wild swan sings in death,
Alone in her lamenting.

[NATURE UNTENANTED.]

WITH fingers light, the lingering breezes quiver
Over the flowing of the still, deep river,
Whose water sings among the reeds, and smiles
'Mid glittering forests and luxuriant isles.
The wooded plain extends its azure ocean—
Waves without voice, and surges without motion.
And the red sunset, through the silent air,
Wide o'er the landscape shakes its golden hair.
Bright flush the clouds, along the distance curled,
That stoop their lips to kiss the gladdened world,
Where the long ridges indistinct retire
And melt and mingle with the heaven of fire.
Far and more far the lines of azure sweep,
Faint as our thoughts when fading into sleep;
When pale and paler on the brain defined,
The distant dreamings die upon the mind.
Oh, widely seems yon narrow plain to swell,—
Then, oh! how far am I from thee, Adèle!
For many a broad champaign of summer green
And many a waving forest spreads between,
And many a wide-extended, surgy hill,
And sullen, rushing river, dark and chill;

And the deep dashing of the dreary sea
Is barrier between us constantly.
And here there is no dreaming of the past,
Here is no halo by remembrance cast,—
No light to linger o'er the lonely scene
With faint reflection, where thou hast not been.
Nature has lost her spirit-stirring spell,
She has no voice to murmur of Adèle.
There's nothing here, and nothing seems to be,—
And nought remembers, nothing mourns with me.
Here was thy voice unheard, thy face unknown,
And thy dear memory's in my heart alone.

[*Richmond, July.*]

[SONG.]

IN winter thou camest, thou madest to rejoice
The still and sad breeze with the sound of thy voice;
The light of thine eye did the darkness beguile,
And my spirit could bask in the sun of thy smile.

Oh, the soft eye of summer is beautiful now;
There are leaves on the forest, and birds on the bough:
The dew and the breezes are balmy by night,—
The earth is all glory, the heaven is all light.

But cold is my lonely heart, never to me
Can the summer of gladness be green without thee:
Fairly the spring may blush, gaily begin,—
'Twill be bright if it cheereth the winter within!

[*Summer.*]

[CHARACTERS,

FROM "MARCOLINI."]

I.

HE is a man most difficult to know;
For many do observe his words alone;
And they are harsh, and haughty, and severe,
And savour of a stern philosophy
That would make man a feelingless machine,
Having nor love, nor hate, nor any passion,—
An unoffending, unforgiving thing,
Most proud, most just, most right, most merciless.
And yet, believe me, Helena,
For there are those have known it (and methinks
Even I can trace some vestige on his brow
Of feeling unerased), those words of his
Are but lip-comers, who have never travelled
About the inner countries of his heart,
And foully do belie them. Though he seems
To walk the world alone, self-severèd
From all affection's ties, and from his seat
Of solitary pain to look around,
Like something not a man, upon the deeds

And thoughts of men who seem no more to him
His fellows, and to judge with eye severe
Of scornful mockery,—yet this stern Giuseppe
Can far more easily be, than find, a friend.

II.

I tell thee, Helena, young Marcolini
Is such a man as angels love to look on!
His heart is like a heaven,—were it not
That it is oped to all. He is so mild,
So pitiful, so gentle, that his thoughts
Go forth to judge the minds of other men
All dazzled by the light of his own love,
And see strange things i' the world.—
Such as—benevolence in misanthropes,—
Mercy in bravoes,—justice in senators,—
And other such things incompatible!
Oh, 'twould be an exceeding lovely world
Were it what he supposes!

[*Summer.*]

MONT BLANC.

THE shadows they are long and deep,
The sky is shadowing into sleep;
And see, the queen of heaven and night,
In liquid loveliness of light,
Rise on the ruin of the day,
And feed upon its fading ray.
It gleamed on scene so fair to see,
I well nigh deemed it fantasy;
For I have dreamed of fairy-land,
Of dance of sprites and elfin band;
And I have dreamed in reverie,
With fancy's wayward witcherie,
Of spots I thought might never be,
(Visions like these of fancy's birth
Seemed far too fair for aught on earth)—
Of crystal lake, of mountains blue,
And spotless snow, and glaciers too;
Of meadows gay as emerald green,
And bright with cloudless sunshine sheen;
And I have dreamed of crystal bower
Lit with red light at evening hour;

Of ruby mine—of coral cave—
Of caverns green with ocean wave ;
But ne'er my visionary glance
Shaped aught so lovely in its trance,
As opens to the gazing eye
When the sun sets on Chamouni.
The sun rode round the heavens that day
Without one cloud to bar his way,
And, worthy of his noontide glow,
Shot his last rays upon the snow ;
A few light flakes his disc beside
Caught the clear light they could not hide,
And like a shower of suns around him,
With chains of amaranth they bound him,
And reared on high, all regal red,
Mont Blanc his pure æthereal head.
That mighty crest stood cloud-like forth,
As scarce connected with the earth ;
Arose its dome with archy swell,
Lone, lovely, inaccessible.
Some cloudy streaks like amethyst
Hung round its side, its crags they kissed,
Or gathering into billows high,
Like fretted ocean in the sky,
Rolled round his unperturbèd head,
So magically islanded.

A RHYMING LETTER.

MY DEAREST RICHARD,*—

I hope you will not (moved by the delay
Of mine epistle to this distant day)
Accuse me of neglect; for if you do,
I can retort an equal blame on you:
For I, who in my study's height sublime
See every wave of calmly passing time
Flow softly onward in one beaten track—
My only journeys into town and back,—
Horace or Homer, all I choose between,—
Dulwich or Norwood my sole change of scene,—
Find every hour exactly like its brother,
And scarce can tell the days from one another;
And cannot find a single circumstance,
As I review, with a reverted glance,
The fast flown autumn months from end to end,
To fill a page, or interest ev'n a friend;
While you, whose distant wandering steps have trod
The blue lake's glittering shingle and the sod—
The short, crisp sod, which on the mountains high
Braves the unkindness of their cloudy sky,—

* [See note, vol. i. p. 224.]

At Dulwich
1842

Whose velvet tuftings most I love to feel
Result elastic underneath my heel—
You, sir, I say, whose eye hath wandered o'er
Bala's blue wave and Harlech's golden shore,
And seen the sun declining towards the west
Light the lone crags of Idris' triple crest,
And watched the restless waters dash and swell
By Pont y Monach,—should have much to tell.
You said, you know, that you would keep a journal
Wherein t' insert the quintessence or kernel
Of your day's doings, like to that of Crusoe.
I hope, but don't believe you have. To do so
Is the severest test of the stern quality
Of a man's powers; for it needs punctuality,
Steadiness, firmness, and determination,
And perseverance—the continuation
Of such a thing is really quite laborious,
And its performance actually glorious;
Which if you've not performed, I hope you'll send
Me a large sheet, close written to the end—
Crossed if you like,—containing full details
Of all you saw, and did, and heard in Wales;
Of your adventures and perambulations,
Delights and hardships, pleasures and vexations,
With all the changes of your tasks and rule,
And all the new varieties of school.

As to myself—a fortnight almost gone
Since I went up to put my toga on—

That learned toga, whose important grace
Befits the studious mien and thoughtful pace
Of those who by the banks of Isis dwell,
In classic hall or philosophic cell.

The winter mists were dark as we were dragged all in
Over the nobly-arching bridge of Magdalen,
And twilight sunk, borne by the bat-winged hours,
Down softly on the still, majestic towers;
The calmly passing river held its breath
Among the bending sedges by its path,
As every wave kissed with its lips so cold
Some sculptured stone or fretwork rich and old;
A moveless light, as from some sacred flame,
Through the grey Gothic of the casements came;
(My fancy heard the air, so still, so dim,
Made soft and holy by the vesper hymn;)
The vâried form of every gorgeous stain
Shone, brightly burning, on the illumined pane;
And as a gentle dream comes calm and kind
O'er the dark slumber of the lonely mind,
When, through the night of grief that knows no morrow,
Pale visions mock the fevered sleep of sorrow,
And fill the brain with brightness, and the ear
With long-lost music that it starts to hear—
So through the dimness of the silent night
Floated that stream of soft and sacred light,—
Fell on the sculptures grey, and touched with gold
The stone made living by hands long since cold,—

And showed where, twisted in fantastic wreath,
Strange features grinned, and stone eyes glanced beneath,
Flushed by the flame and by a life in death;
Then fitful o'er the waters danced the ray,
And 'midst the dim reflection died away.

In Oxford there are two hotels—which are
(Perchance you know) the "Angel" and the "Star;"
The landlord has contrived (oh, avarice horrid!)
To put the star upon the angel's forehead,
Which, as I think, both businesses may mar;
'Twill then be falling Angel,—shooting star.
The "Angel" was our choice—we always went
To that—we like an old establishment.
A night, a day past o'er—the time drew near,—
The morning came—I felt a little queer;
Came to the push; paid some tremendous fees;
Past; and was capped and gowned with marvellous ease;
Then went to the Vice-Chancellor to swear
Not to wear boots, nor cut or comb my hair
Fantastically,—to shun all such sins
As playing marbles or frequenting inns,—
Always to walk with breeches black or brown on,—
When I go out, to put my cap and gown on,—
With other regulations of the sort, meant
For the just ordering of my comportment;
Which done, in less time than I can rehearse it, I
Found myself member of the University.

Believe me, sir, it made me quite ecstatical
To hear you had become so mathematical,
And passed the bridge, so strangely named from those
Who cannot pass it. At this half-year's close
I hope such geometrical employment
Will furnish us with profit and enjoyment.
My father and my mother (hang it!—join—
Won't join with any rhyme that I can coin)—
Mother and cousin beg to join in kind
Love,—and I do remain as undersigned,
With a most loving friendship in my mind,
Remaining based on a firm pediment,
Your most devoted—most obedient—
And most affectionate
JOHN R.

[*October.*]

1837.

AT THE AGE OF 17–18 YEARS.

THE GIPSIES [*finished in March*].
THE SCYTHIAN GRAVE.
REMEMBRANCE.
CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD.

THE GIPSIES.

Vitamque sub divo, et trepidis agant
In rebus.—HOR. *Carm.*, Lib. iii., Od. 2, line 6.

'TWAS in the hollow of a forest dim,
Where the low breezes sang their evening hymn,
As in a temple by thick branches aisled,
Whose leaves had many voices, weak or wild;
Their summer voice was like the trooping tread
Of fiery steeds, to meteor battle bred;
Their autumn voice was like the wailing cry
Of a great nation, bowed in misery;
The deep vast silence of the winter's wood
Was like the hush of a dead multitude.
And, in the centre of its summer shade,
Opened a narrow space of velvet glade,
Where sunbeams, through the foliage slanting steep,
Lay, like a smile upon the lips of sleep.
And dew, that thrilled the flowers with full delight,
Fell from the soft eyes of the heaven by night;
And richly there the panting earth put on
A wreathèd robe of blossoms wild and wan:

The purple pansies glowed beneath unseen,*
Like voiceless thoughts within a mind serene;
The passioned primrose blessed the morning gale
And starry lilies shook in their pavilions pale.
'Twas there, when through the twilight, calm and cool,
The musing sages of the village school
Sought the bright berry, or the savoury root,
Or plucked the hazel's triply clustered fruit,
Or climbed the crackling branch, with dangerous toil,
To seek the songster's nest, and seize its spotted spoil;
When emerald light, through tangled leafage seen,
Betrayed them near that glade so gaily green,
With stealthy step, their slow approach to hide,
The urchins bent the bramble boughs aside;
For often there the copse could scarce conceal
The blue smoke curling from the evening meal,
(To furnish forth that feast, so soon prepared,
Some village dame laments her rifled yard;
Some village cock, his pride of plumage o'er,
Shall call around his clucking dames no more,)
While round the gleaming fire, in circle rude,
The outcast tribe consumed the unblessed food,
While dark eyes flashed, bold, beautiful, and wild,
Through raven hair, and in their lightning smiled,
To hear some Gipsy knight recount, with pride,
How he had borne him at the beadle's side
In manner worthy of his father's fame;

* Not intended to allude to the allegorical use of this flower made by Ophelia in *Hamlet*, and Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*.

Had foiled the justice, and had robbed his dame ;
Had risked all danger, and escaped mischance ;—
Impudence armed with knavery for his lance.
While, half-retired, arrayed in Gipsy state,
An elder crone in musing silence sate.
Well were her murmured words, and mystic tone,
And piercing glance to village maidens known ;
Well was she skilled, beneath the breathing brow,
To read the thoughts and trace the feelings' flow ;
And, by the dial of the face, to find
The moving shadows of the secret mind.
The wondering rustics disavowed their fears,
Yet heard her mystic words with anxious ears ;
Smiled if she passed their doors with blessing by,
And feared the presage of her angered eye.
Sceptics there were, whose more enlightened sense
Refused to own a Gipsy's influence ;
Who shook their heads, and called the peasants fools—
Nay ! talked of vagrants and of ducking-stools !
But these, the learnèd village doctors, shook
Before her darkened or contemptuous look ;
Their reason quailed, and logic's self gave ground.
And sages shuddered if the Gipsy frowned.

But younger minds, less wise, but far more pure
Hung with full faith upon her words obscure ;
Intent they listened, for experience knew
Their import secret, and their presage true.
For well the sibyl measured, and designed

The future fortune by the present mind ;
And, to her prescient eye, the youthful mien
Betrayed the tints of manhood's varied scene.
Strangely she used the power her art possessed
To stamp the ductile gold of boyhood's breast :
She fired the humble, and the proud controlled,
Now roused the fearful, now repressed the bold.
Well pleased, the ardent boy—whose youthful might,
First in the game, and unsubdued in fight,
Flushes his cheek, when others pause and pale,
And crowns him leader where his comrades quail,—
Hears of his fame in future storms of war,
Purchased with many an honourable scar.
Deceitful words ! that give strange passions birth,
As winds of spring arouse the throbbing earth :
Forth from his startled spirit, fierce and free,
The quick thoughts leap, like fire beneath the sea ;
And purple-pinioned visions wake, and wind
Their golden hair around his dazzled mind
And fill his senses with a rushing call
As of the trump to the war-festival :
Round his thrilled heart the swift sensations swim,—
The burning pulses leap from limb to limb ;
Kindles his ardent eye, his clenching hand
Grasps, like a steely hilt, the hazel wand ;
And firmly falls his slow determined tread,
As haughty conquerors spurn the cold, dim-visaged dead.
Woe for the youthful dream, which burning still,
Fair hope may cherish, and dark fate fulfil !

Alas! the mocking forms, that flit and fade
Through early visions, in the purple shade—
Ghastly, and dim discerned, and pointing pale
To things concealed by hope's thick-dazzling veil.
The desert breeze's pestilential breath;
The midnight-field, bedropped with dewy death;
The mist, instinct with agony of life,
Sobbed from the field of undistinguished strife;
The gnawing fetters, and the dungeon grey,
The teeth of timeless hours, which, day by day,
Feed on the dull heart's desolate decay;
The tears of hopeless grief, the inward groan,
Of those whose love is lost—whose life is left alone.

But the sage sibyl to the softer souled
Another fate, a different fame, foretold:
The gentle boy, who shunned his playmates rude,
To seek the silver voice of solitude,
And, by some stream, amidst the shadows grey
Of arching boughs, to muse the hours away,
Smiled, as her words, like gentle echoes, fell
Of the high hope with which the secret cell
Of his own heart was lightened; which had led
His young imaginations up, and fed
His thoughts with pleasant fire. Yet who shall know
What lowly lot of unremembered woe
May quench that hope and aspiration high,
In the deep waves of darkened destiny?
What fate unblessed by any mourner's tear,

May crown the hope, may close the brief career?
A few short years, slow withering as they move,
Traversed by burning thoughts; a light of love
Smiling at its own sorrow, fancy fed;
A heart to its own desolation dead;
Pale osier withes, in decent order bound;
And a soft smile of flowers along a low green mound.

But when the woods were veiled with twilight shade,
Came fearful feet along the velvet glade,
Light as the tinkling leaves, that wander wide
When Vallombrosa mourns her prostrate pride.
With fitful fall, as throbbed the gentle breast,
Whose hope excited, and whose awe repressed.
Then, nearer drawn, like white-robed dryad seen,
The blushes gleaming through the leafage green;
The village maiden came, and, bright with youth,
Gave the white hand, and sought the words of sooth.
The keen-eyed sibyl traced each crimson line,
As pale and passive lay the fingers fine;
And watched the orient blood, with flushing flow,
By turns enkindle, and forget to glow;
The eyes, averted to her glance severe,
Betrayed their flashing hope or quivering fear;
She saw, and speaking, wove, with cruel art,
Soft silver meshes round the youthful heart,
And touched its core with lightning thoughts, in vain;
Played with its passion, sported with its pain.
Oh! cruel words, to rouse emotions there

Whose voice is rapture, but whose end—despair;
That suck the blood, yet fan, with vampyre wing,
The heart, until it bless the agony they bring.
For, sibyl, thine no transitory power,
No passing voice, no mockery of an hour.
Thou canst not know how dearly may be bought
That moment's kindling of the girlish thought,
Of midnight wakings, and day-dreams, and years
Of sickened hope, and unavailing tears.

Such the poor remnant of the faith that seemed
To read the roll of destinies it dreamed.
Small triumph now, for that once lofty art
To thrill a youth's, or break a maiden's heart;
Or raise, by happy chance or artful wile,
The peasant's wonder or the sage's smile!
Its higher influence lost, for now no more
Shall monarchs own the presage as of yore;
When on some mountain's moon-illumined height,
The Eastern shepherd watched the moving night, †
(That soul-like night, whose melancholy smile
Looks lovely down on every Eastern isle),
Distinguishing the stars, that, charged with doom,
Passed on and upward through the glorious gloom.

* As in the time of Catherine of Medici, and of Henry III. and Henry IV. of France.

† Astrology—certainly a science derived either from the Assyrians or Egyptians—appears to have been the only superstition believed in by the wandering tribes.

Ye fiery-footed spirits! that do use
To tread the midnight darkness, and confuse
All æther with your shooting, and intrace,
With lines of rushing fire, the restless space
Of silence infinite; ye meteors pale!
Vapours and mists that burn, and float, and fail,
For ever and for ever, and which bless
The gloom of the unbounded loneliness
Of the wild void with your swift passing on;
Ye tearful stars, and planets weak and wan!—
Meet gods, methinks, were ye for those whose breast
Was but one weariness without a rest;
Whose life was desolation, and whose soul,
Hopeless and homeless, knew no soft control
From the sweet chains that other beings bind,
The love of God or man—of country or of kind.

Along the reedy shore of Nilus' flood
Dark Egypt bows before her monster god;
And meeting millions, mute with awe, uplift
The temple tall above the sand-waves swift;
And mourn their prayers unheard with lengthened wail,
Led by the measured voice of many a priestess pale.
By Ganges' sullen billows, blood besprent,
Bereavèd mothers lift their loud lament;
Amidst the desert place of mountains grey,
The sculptured idols sit in rude array.
Through many a sombre isle and mighty fane
The prostrate crowds revere, adore, in vain;

And wake the silent shore and sacred wave
With notes of worship wild within the carvèd cave.

But, 'midst the wandering tribe, no reverenced shrine
Attests a knowledge of the Power Divine.
By these alone, of mortals most forlorn,
Are priest and pageant met with only scorn;
To all mankind beside, through earth and sky,
Is breathed an influence of Deity.
To that great One, whose Spirit interweaves
The pathless forests with their life of leaves;
And lifts the lowly blossoms, bright in birth,
Out of the cold, black, rotting, charnel earth;
Walks on the moon-bewildered waves by night,
Breathes in the morning breeze, burns in the evening light;
Feeds the young ravens when they cry; uplifts
The pale-lipped clouds along the mountain cliffs;
Moves the pale glacier on its restless path;
Lives in the desert's universal death;
And fills, with that one glance, which none elude,
The grave, the city, and the solitude.
To This, the mingled tribes of men below,
Savage and sage, by common instinct bow;
And, by one impulse, all the earth abroad,
Or carve the idol or adore the god:
But these, the earth's wide wanderers, mocked of fate,—
These, the most impious, most desolate,

Careless of unseen power or semblant stone,—
Live in this lost and lifeless world alone.

Oh, life most like to death! No mother mild
Lifts the light fingers of her dark-eyed child
In early offered prayer; no loving one
Curtains the cradle round with midnight orison;
Nor guides, to form the Mighty Name, the slips
And early murmurs of unconscious lips.
No reverend sire, with tales of heavenly truth,
Instructs the awed, attentive ear of youth.
Through life's short span, whatever chance betide,
No hope can joy, no fear can guard or guide;
No trust supports in danger or despair;
Grief hath no solace, agony no prayer.
The lost are lost for ever, and the grave
Is as a darkness deep, whence none can save
The loved or the lamented, as they fade,
Like dreams at dawn, into that fearful shade.
Oh! then what words are they whose peaceful power
Can soothe the twilight time of terror's hour;
Or check the frighted gasp of fainting breath;
Or clothe with calmness the cold lips of death;
Or quench the fire within the phrenzied eye,
When it first dreams the dreams that never die?
O Grave, how fearful is thy victory!
O Death, how dread thy sting, when *not to be*
Is the last hope whose coldness can control
The meteor fires that mock and sear the soul;

When through the deep delirium's darkness red
Come thoughts, that join the living with the dead;
Fancies too fearful to be dreams alone,
And forms which Madness knows are not her own,—
Which even annihilation cannot quell—
The fire of vengeance, and the fear of hell.

Such death is death indeed, which nor bestows
Peace on the soul, nor on the clay repose.
For these, no grave is pale with blossoms round;
No hallowed home, in consecrated ground,
Opens its narrow arms, and bosom cold,
To soothe their sleep beneath the moveless mould;
No whispered prayer, no sacred service said,
Bequeaths to dust the deeply reverenced dead:
No mossy stone, when other memories cease,
Shall keep his name, or mark his place of peace.
With his (although the churchyard room be wide)
No dust shall mingle, none shall sleep beside;
Unwept, unknown, he lies: the outcast band,
To whom the world is all a foreign land,
Remember not the graves their fathers own,
But pass away, and leave their lost alone.

The wandering ostrich marks her place of rest;
The lonely mountain eagle knows her nest;
The sobbing swiftness of the faint gazelle
Longs for her refuge green,—her living well;
The many wandering tribes of weary wing

All have their home, their rest, their welcoming;
The lonely Indian, when his dark canoe
Glides o'er the sea and sleeps upon the blue
Faints for the foliage of his native isle,
To break the sea's "innumerable smile;" *
When through the deserts, far from haunts of man,
Winds, with slow pace, the panting caravan;
When, scorched and weary, move the mingled bands,
O'er mocking vapours and deceitful sands,
With keen and eager eye, the desert-bred
Explores the waste horizon's dimness dead;
Through the thick heaven's bluely burning breath,
Purple with pestilence and dark with death,
How thrills his aching heart, when, far and few,
The clustered palm-trees meet his misty view,—
The group of palm-trees tall, that grow beside
The Arab village where his fathers died:
He asks no gardens gay, no champaigns green,
No milder clime, to fertilise the scene;
To him the desert rock, the palm-trees tall,
The fountain pure, are home, and home is all.

The mountaineer, returning from afar,
Sees in the dim cloud, like a guiding star,
The peak, with everlasting winter pale,
Whose base is bordered by his native vale;
Scents the keen air which nerves his childish limb;
And o'er his swelling spirit comes a hymn

* Ανήριθμον γέλασμα.—ÆSCH. *Prom. Vinct.* 90.

Of gladness and rejoicing,—soft and low
The voices of the hours of long ago.
What boots it that the rocks around be rude,
And dark the countenance of solitude?
How dear is desolation, where have dwelt
The feelings we have yearned for, long unfelt!
How loved the accents of departed years,
That fill the heart with ecstasy of tears;
That touch, and try, and wake, with pleasant pain,
The chords we thought would never wake again!
Those only know, through lengthened years who roam,
How blest the native land, how beautiful the home.
Woe for the lot of that abandoned race,
For whom the wide earth hath no dwelling-place;
The doomed, with weary breast and restless feet,
No bourne to reach, no welcoming to meet!
Alas! the very winds and waves had rest,
Far in the purple silence of the West,
That now lament, along a colder coast,
The home of heaven, the sleep that they have lost,
Hoping no peace: but those are more forlorn,
Who, having none to hope, have none to mourn.
To these, less blest than bird, or wave, or wind,
All climes are strange, all countries are unkind.
Oh! the deep silence of the lonely heart,
When no known voices make it move or start,
Until its numbed emotions faint, and lie
In an unwaking moveless agony,—
The peace of powerless pain—and waste away,

Though the strong spirit struggle with decay,
In yearning for the thoughts it hath not known;
As the deep sea, when it is left alone,
Doth pine for agitation, and will rot *
Like corpses in the sleep that dreameth not;
So pines, so fades the spirit, when unmoved
By any voice, remembered, known, or loved.
Such pangs of silence in the hearts have birth
Of those who have no fellowship on earth;
For whom waste wilds and desert skies extend
Paths without peace, and wanderings without end;
Life without light, and death obscure with fear,
The world without a home, the grave without a tear.

Yet have they their inheritance—the force
Of that high influence, which pursues its course
Through breathing spirits, as an eagle cleaves
The red clouds which the weak wind interweaves.
Hast thou not watched the dark eye's changing light,
Flashing for ever through its living night,
Where the wild thoughts, deep, oh! how strangely deep,
Their passioned presence and soft motion keep?
There lightens forth the spirit visible,
Which, from the mind's dark, narrow, clay-cold cell,

* "The very deep did rot,—
That ever this should be,—
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea."—*Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner.*

Gives wings to the expatiation wide,
Which is its light, its life, its being, and its pride.
It is the universal soul that fills
The airs and echoes of a thousand hills,
And all the æthereal clouds, whose wings, unfurled,
Fan the swift sickness of the restless world,
The green sea's ghastly waves above, beneath
The sere leaves in their Autumn dance of death;
All things that move on earth are swift and free,
All full of the same fire of lovely Liberty:
This, this is their inheritance—the might
That fills the tyrant's throne with fear, his night
With dreams of desolation; that unbinds
The wrath of retribution in the minds
Of those whom he has crushed; and, from the hand
Breaking the fetter, gives and guides the brand;
This is the birthright, which alone can be
Their home, their hope, their joy, their trust, their deity.

"Ye abject tribes, ye nations poor and weak!"
(Thus might, methinks, the haughty wanderer speak),
"Yours be the life of peace, the servile toil;
Yours be the wealth, its despicable spoil;
Stoop to your tyrants' yoke with mildness meet,
Cringe at his throne, and worship at his feet;
Revere your priesthood's consecrated guilt;
Bow in the temples that your dreams have built;
Adore your gods—the visionary plan

Of dotards grey, in mockery of man :—
To me the life hath wildest welcoming,
That fears nor man, nor spirit, priest, nor king.
Be mine no simple home, no humble hearth,—
My dome, the heaven,—my dwelling, all the earth.
No birth can bind me, in a nation's cause,
To fight their battles, or obey their laws.
The priest may speak, and women may grow pale;
Me he derides not with his ghastly tale;
Virtue and vice, the names by which the wise
Have governed others, I alike despise.
No love can move me, and no fear can quell,
Nor check my passions, nor control my will.
The soul, whose body fears no change of clime,
Aims at no virtue, trembles at no crime;
But, free and fearless as its clay, shall own
No other will upon its fiery throne.
When fate commands it, come the mortal strife!
I fear nor dying, nor an after life.
Such as it hath been must my spirit be,—
Destroyed, not shackled,—if existent, free.
Let not my limbs in weakened age consume,
Nor pale diseases waste me to the tomb;
Let not the frost of winters in my blood
Give to the grave a cold, corrupted food.
Mine be the death of lightning swift and red,
Born out of darkness, and in darkness dead:
No other will the forkèd flash can guide,
Nor tame the terror of its path of pride:

Forth from its natal cloud it works its will,—
Then pauses in its power, and all is dark and still."

Such are the thoughts of Freedom, unrestrained;
Such is the good which men have felt, or feigned,
To be the highest of all gifts that bless
The mortal dwellers in this wilderness.
Freedom—with which the heaven of Hellas burned,
For which her warriors bled, her exiles mourned,
Till, like the rushing of a meteor's hair,
Waved the wide banner through her purple air;—
Freedom—the loved possession, which, when lost,
Myriads have sought along the lonely coast
Where liberty is none,—whence none return;—
Freedom—who kindles heavenly stars which burn
Within the heart she loves, and lifts the brave
Above the earthy thoughts that would their souls enslave,
Becomes, if unrestrained, so deep a curse
As nations should grow pale at;—never worse
Hath worked the ruin of the kings of Time.
It wakes the blackly-waving weeds of crime,
Which, when the dark, deep surge of passion raves,
Do turn and toss within its wildest waves.
It is the standard whose dark folds unfurled
Shade the red ruins of a wasted world;
It is the shout that Madness laughs to hear,
When dark Rebellion grasps his gory spear,
And sends his minions forth, who never cease
From withering up all pity and all peace:

Fearful as is the pestilence's path,
And feeding, worm-like, on the nation's death,
Which they have cast into the dark abysm
Of guilty Freedom, worst of despotism.

There's but one liberty of heart and soul,
A thing of beauty, an unfelt control,—
A flow, as waters flow in solitude,
Of gentle feeling, passioned, though subdued,—
When Love and Virtue and Religion join
To weave their bonds of bliss, their chains divine,
And keep the heaven-illumined heart they fill
Softly communing with itself, and still
In the sole freedom that can please the good,
A mild and mental, unfelt servitude.

THE SCYTHIAN GRAVE.

The following stanzas refer to some very elegant and affecting customs of the Scythians, as avouched by Herodotus (*Melpomene*, 71), relative to the burial of their kings,* round whose tombs they were wont to set up a troop of fifty skeleton scarecrows—armed corpses—in a manner very horrible, barbarous, and indecorous ; besides sending out of the world, to keep the king company, numerous cupbearers, grooms, lackeys, coachmen, and cooks ; all which singular, and, to the individuals concerned, somewhat objectionable proceedings, appear to have been the result of a feeling, pervading the whole nation, of the poetical and picturesque.

I.

THEY laid the lord
Of all the land
Within his grave of pride ;
They set the sword
Beside the hand
That could not grasp, nor guide :
They left, to soothe and share his rest
Beneath the moveless mould,
A lady, bright as those that live,
But oh, how calm and cold !

* These are the kings to whom the prophecies in the Old Testament refer :—"They shall go down to the grave with their weapons of war, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living."

They left, to keep due watch and ward,
Thick vassals round their slumbering lord,
Ranged in menial order all—
They may hear, when *he* can call.

II.

They built a mound
Above the breast
Whose haughty heart was still;
Each stormy sound
That wakes the west,
Howls o'er that lonely hill.
Underneath, an armed troop
In stalwart order stay:
Flank to flank they stand, nor stoop
Their lances, day by day.
Round the dim sepulchral cliff,
Horsemen fifty, fixed and stiff—
Each with his bow, and each with his brand,
With his bridle grasped in his steadfast hand.

III.

The soul of sleep
May dim the brow,
And check the soldier's tread;
But who can keep
A guard so true,
As do the dark-eyed dead?

The foul hyenas howl and haunt
About their charnel lair ;
The flickering rags of flesh—they flaunt
Within the plague-struck air :
But still the skulls do gaze and grin,
Though the worms have gnawed the nerves within ;
And the jointed toes, and the fleshless heel,
Clatter and clank in their stirrup of steel.

IV.

The snows are swift
That glide so pale
Along the mountain dim ;
Beneath their drift
Shall rust the mail,
And blanch the nerveless limb :
While shower on shower, and wreath on wreath,
From vapours thunder-scarred,*
Surround the misty mound of death
And whelm its ghastly guard ;
Till those who held the earth in fear,
Lie meek, and mild, and powerless here,
Without a single sworded slave
To keep their name, or guard their grave.

* It is one of the peculiarities of the climate, according to Herodotus, that it thunders in the winter, not in the summer.

REMEMBRANCE.

I OUGHT to be joyful; the jest and the song
And the light tones of music resound through the throng;
But its cadence falls dully and dead on my ear,
And the laughter I mimic is quenched in a tear.

For here are no longer, to bid me rejoice,
The light of thy smile, or the tone of thy voice,
And, gay though the crowd that's around me may be,
I am alone, Adèle, parted from thee.

Alone, said I, dearest? Oh, never we part,—
For ever, for ever, thou'rt here in my heart;
Sleeping or waking, where'er I may be,
I have but one thought, and that thought is of thee.

When the planets roll red through the darkness of night,
When the morning bedews all the landscape with light,
When the high sun of noon-day is warm on the hill,
And the breezes are quiet, the green leafage still;

I love to look out o'er the earth and the sky,
For Nature is kind, and seems lonely as I;
Whatever in Nature most lovely I see,
Has a voice that recalls the remembrance of thee.

Remember—remember :—those only can know
How dear is remembrance, whose hope is laid low ;
'Tis like clouds in the west, that are gorgeous still,
When the dank dews of evening fall deadly and chill ;

Like the bow in the cloud that is painted so bright,—
Like the voice of the nightingale, heard through the night,
Oh ! sweet is remembrance, most sad though it be,
For remembrance is all that remaineth for me.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

NIGHT.

FAINT from the bell the ghastly echoes fall,
  That grates within the grey cathedral tower—
Let me not enter through the portal tall,
  Lest the strange spirit of the moonless hour
Should give a life to those pale people, who
Lie in their fretted niches, two and two—
Each with his head on pillowy stone reposed,
And his hands lifted, and his eyelids closed.

A cold and starless vapour, through the night,
  Moves as the paleness of corruption passes
Over a corpse's features, like a light
  That half illumines what it most effaces;
The calm round water gazes on the sky,
Like the reflection of the lifeless eye
Of one who sleeps and dreams of being slain,
Struggling in frozen frenzy, and in vain.

From many a mouldering oriel, as to flout
  Its pale, grave brow of ivy-tressèd stone,

Comes the incongruous laugh, and revel shout:—
Above, some solitary casement, thrown
Wide open to the wavering night wind,
Admits its chill—so deathful, yet so kind
Unto the fevered brow and fiery eye
Of one, whose night hour passeth sleeplessly.

Ye melancholy chambers! I could shun
The darkness of your silence, with such fear,
As places where slow murder had been done.
How many noble spirits have died here,
Withering away in yearnings to aspire,
Gnawed by mocked hope—devoured by their own fire!
Methinks the grave must feel a colder bed
To spirits such as these, than unto common dead.

1838.

AT THE AGE OF 18–19 YEARS.

The Exile of St. Helena [*before March* 31].

The Recreant.

The Wreck.

Aristodemus at Platæa.

Song—We Care not what Skies are the Clearest.

Song—Though Thou hast not a Feeling for One.

Horace—Iter ad Brundusium.

Memory.

The Name.

Canzonet—The Winter's Chill hath Charmed the Wave.

Fragment from a Meteorological Journal.

Canzonet—There's a Change in the Green of the Leaf.

The Mirror.

Song of the Tyrolese after the Battle of Brixen.

A Scythian Banquet-Song.

THE EXILE OF ST. HELENA.

"How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"
—(2 Samuel i. 27.)

Ὦ δῖος αἰθὴρ καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοαὶ,
. . . . ποντίων τε κυμάτων
ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, παμμῆτόρ τε γῆ.
καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλον ἡλίου καλῶ·
δέρχθηθ' οἵαις αἰκίαισιν
διακναιόμενος τὸν μυριετῆ
χρόνον ἀθλεύσω.
—(ÆSCHYLUS, *Prometheus Vinctus*, 88–95.)

SYNOPSIS.

INTRODUCTION.—Graves of Achilles and Napoleon. — Comparison of the fates of Sennacherib, Alexander, and Hannibal with that of Napoleon.—Circumstances of his fall slightly touched upon.—Campaigns.—The Island and the Exile.—Feelings of the French relative to his humiliation.—His own feelings and memories.—Events of his past life alluded to.—The ardour of many in his cause unabated.—Speculations as to the cause of his fall.—His death.—Meditations above his grave.—Conclusion.

WHEN war-worn Greece accused, in grief of heart,
Her adverse fates, and cursed the Dardan dart,
Meet was the mound on Ilion's plain, to keep
Her hero's ashes and protect his sleep;

The mound that looks along the level shore
Where its cold inmate warred—and wars no more.
So deemed the blind Ionian, when he stood
Near the soft murmur of Scamander's flood,
Till all the patriot fire responsive rose,
Poured the full song, and wove the exulting close,
Hymning his country's fame beside her chief's repose.

But he who—musing where the golden grain *
Glows fair and fruitful on Marengo's plain,
Recalls to fancy's eye the shifting scene †
Of fiercer fight, and conquest far more keen
Than Ilion waged, or Greece achieved—can trace
No record of its hero's resting-place.
But foreign hands a distant grave have made,
And nameless earth upon his breast is laid;
And few lament his final rest profaned,
His tomb unhonoured, and his glory stained.
And dark he leaves the page, and dumb the lute;
The chronicler severe,‡ the Muses mute.
Alas, how justly! since they cannot raise

* *The golden grain.*—The field of Marengo at the present time is chiefly sown with Indian-corn (which furnishes the peasant of North Italy with his principal article of food), and intersected with rows of mulberry trees.

† *The shifting scene.*—Alluding to the sudden turn of fortune which gave Napoleon the victory.

‡ *The chronicler severe.*—Napoleon's history will never be well written. Men are too much interested in the shame or the glory with which he covered the flags of their nations to be impartial, until time shall have rendered their feelings just, and then it will have destroyed their materials.

The warrior's glory to the patriot's praise.
And if they follow, by the Atlantic wave,
The tyrant's footstep to the exile's grave,
How shall the burden of their song be borne ?
'Twere insult to rejoice, impiety to mourn.

Angel ! ordained of highest Heaven to guide,
As it has willed, the steps of human pride ;
Whose presence guards, with more than mortal power,
A mortal's phrenzy through its ordered hour,—
Thy work was mighty when, in purple state,
The swart Assyrian smiled at Salem's gate :
Thy work was mighty by the Indian deep,
When Ammon mourned his sword's unwonted sleep :
Thy work was mighty when, on Cannæ's plain,
Exulting Carthage spurned the silent slain :
Thy work was mightiest when, like levin* flame,
Down the dark Alps the Gallic Consul came,
Led his swift legions o'er the necks of kings,
Bowed Europe's pride beneath his withering wings,
Wreathed regal purple round his warrior limbs,
And wrote his restless path in dust of diadems.

Angel ! whose touch is death, whose glance, decay,—
Humbler of sworded strength and sceptred sway,—
Dark was thy presence when the desert's breath
Bade pale Assyria keep her camp of death ;

* *Levin.*—I am afraid this word has no higher authority than Scott's, who uses it perpetually when speaking of lightning.

Dark was thy presence when, with sudden peace,
Deep hollowed marble clasped the boast of Greece: *
Dark was thy presence when, in powerless hate,
The Carthaginian sought a stranger's gate:
Darkest thy presence when the dead lay piled
In the slow flight of conquest's chosen child,
And God's own anger smote, without a sword,
The millioned might of France's fiery lord;
Then bowed his crestless helm and shattered shield
To the foul dust on many a fatal field,—
Yet partly spared at first. The warrior's smile
Again comes lightening from the lonely isle;
And France replaces, with a younger host,
The urnless ashes of her legions lost.
Her dark troops gather swiftly. Who shall meet
The battle-murmur of their mingled feet?
Up, England! for thine honour. From afar
She hears the call,—she pours a wave of war;
And, 'midst the myriad tread, now low, now loud
Of columns crashing through quick-lighted cloud
With carnage choked, the desolated blue
Of day fades weakly over Waterloo.
Ten thousand stars their heavenly thrones attain,
One rises not,† and will not rise again.

* "Cum tamen a figulis munitam intraverat urbem
Sarcophago contentus erit."—*Juv.* x. 171.

† *One rises not.*—When Cardinal Fesch was endeavouring to persuade Napoleon to abandon his designs upon Russia, the Emperor led him to the window. "Do you see that star?" "No," replied the Cardinal. "But I do," said Napoleon, and left the prelate, as if he had fully answered his objections.

Its place in heaven is dark; and he, whose pride
It once was swift to lead and bright to guide,
Hath gone down to the dwelling of a slave,—
A dim place, half oblivion, half grave;
And all the crowd of kingly destinies
That once lethargic lay, and lulled, in his,*
Stretch their dark limbs again, with shivering thrill
Of life renewed and independent will.
The echo of his fall lies like a trance
On windless banner and unlifted lance;
And the pale brows of men, and voiceless lips
(As leaves lie still beneath the sun's eclipse)
Are pressed with awe, through all the earth abroad,
At the swift sheathing of the sword of God.

Far in the southern sea, where changing night
Rolls round the pole its orbs of stranger light,
And wandering eyes their native stars forget,
A narrow isle is solitary set;
The purple light of evening's swift decline
Bathes its calm coast, and gilds its bordering brine.
From the grey crest of a commanding steep,
A lonely figure gazes on the deep:
Perchance some fisher finds his parting prow
By its white furrow on the blue below?
Some sun-worn peasant's lingering delight
Catches the coolness of the breeze of night?

* As the possessive pronoun here is the most important word in the sentence, I may perhaps be excused for letting it conclude the line.

Yet doth it stand, as peasant never stood,
With martial mien, and majesty of mood:
Nor peasant glance, nor vulgar mind is there,
But a dark quiet of serene despair,—
Serene, though quivering lip and kindling eye
Struggle more weakly with the memory
Which a quenched madness, and a cold control
Seal on the brow, and gyve into the soul.
Can it be thou! despiser of the spear,
Spirit of armies, desolate, and here!
See'st thou the red sun, lowering on the flood,
Send its swift waters to the shore, like blood? *
Well doth thy prison mock thy throne of old,—
That throne, by surges washed, how dark, how cold!
Which those who mourn for those who shed complain—
Not that they spent, but that they spent in vain.
France never wept for all the mists of life
That reeked from every blood-hot place of strife;
Nor mourned the bones of brave men laid so low,
To blanch by sea and shore, in sand and snow;
But mourns the life she lost, the love she gave,
All spent for one who dares to die a slave.

Oh! exiled less in body than in name,
Far from thy country, farther from thy fame:
As the weak ashes,† which the billowy beat

* *Waters like blood.*—Such an effect is frequent in southern latitudes. I have seen it beautifully over the Gulf of Genoa, with Elba in the distance. So in 2 Kings iii. 22.

† *As the weak ashes.*—St. Helena, like the neighbouring island of Ascension, is an extinct volcano.

Of the dull ocean crumbles at thy feet,
Are to their former strength, when earthquake spread
With waves of living fire their heaving bed,
Art thou to what thou wast. Dost thou not start
To feel such shadows passing o'er thy heart,
As once were each a destiny, though now
Nothing but thoughts; and on thy brain and brow
Pale, powerless images of lost command,
Traced with such finger as the sea's on sand,—
Struggling like phrenzied dreamers, with the sense
Of their most unaccustomed impotence?
Oh! who can trace the swift and living line,
The mingled madness, of such dreams as thine?
Lo! through the veiling shadows of despair,
Pale faces gaze, and fiery eyeballs glare,
Till thy soul quails at what they seek and see,
Knowing them long since dark to all but thee.
Then softer features soothe thee, long forgot,
Of those who loved thy childhood, and are not;
And gentle voices fall, with sudden fear,
On the quick sense of thy remembering ear,
First heard in youth, now mingled with the noise
Of battle wavering in contested poise,
Each passing slowly to a shout, or moan—
The same in voice, though older in its tone.
The contest thickens; to thy kindling sight
A pale plume * dashes through its closest night,

* *A pale plume.*—Alluding to the death of Murat, whose white plume used to be a rallying-point in battle.

Before whose checkless charge the lances fail,
The banners tremble, and the squadrons quail.
'Tis past—and through the air's unbroken sleep,
A muffled drum beats distantly and deep.
Again the dream is changed,—and noontide glows
On Scrivia's plain and Cervin's * purple snows.
O'er the red field thy rallying columns sweep,
Swift as the storm, resistless as the deep:
The hostile lines in wild disorder fly;
Bormida's waters drift them as they die.
The vision fades, and through its sudden gloom,
Thy startled eye discerns a lonely tomb,†
Beneath Mont Velan, where faint voices bless
The unwearied watchers of the wilderness.
Then darker scenes, by wilder thoughts displayed,
Distinct succeed, and fill the dreadful shade:
Places of human peace or natural pride,
Withering in flames or desolately dyed
With life of all who loved them once, outpoured
On roofless hearths left silent by the sword.
Last rise, recalled upon thy burning brain,
The lofty altar and columnar fane;
Pontiff and peer, beneath the marble gate,
In sacred pride and royal reverence wait;
And one is there, of gentle eye and brow,
Whose love was timid then, how lonely now!

* *Cervin.*—The Matterhorn.

† *A lonely tomb.*—Desaix, as is well known, is buried in the chapel of the Augustines of St. Bernard.

Whose constant heart, by every injury torn,
Thy grief will crush, though it could bear thy scorn.
And she is there, and pomp of kingly crowd
Around thee gathered and before thee bowed.
Hark! how the shouting nations round thy throne
The iron crown and doveless sceptre own.
Wake, wake; avenger, victor, tyrant, slave;
Thy strength was withered by the God who gave!
Behold thy guarding pomp,—ribbed sand and hissing wave.

Yet not unmourned, though aidless, is thy fate,
Though lonely, not left wholly desolate;
Even when the sun it worshipped once is set,
Can veteran love its former faith forget?
Still to thy lot the hearts of thousands cleave,
Fierce to avenge, or eager to retrieve;
Still at thy name the warrior fires arise,
Glow in the heart, and lighten in the eyes;
From quiet swords their rusty scabbards fall,
And blunt spears tinkle on the idle wall.
Oh! if the hope of France's wounded heart
Clings to thee, crushed and fall'n as now thou art,
How had she rallied, in thy dangerous hour,
To save thine honour, or to prop thy power!
Had the stern will of thine ambition spared
Her life, to love thee, or her strength to guard,—
Had the high soul, which all the earth subdued,
Learned but to rule its own inquietude,—

The cries of men, and all the noise of war
Had shrunk in whispers from thy throne afar;
The motion of Earth's spears had sunk aside,
Bowed down in the calm presence of thy pride;
As, underneath the west wind's foot is bent
The pointed grass in surges innocent.
The madness, and the murmurs, and the hate
Of nations had sunk silent; thou had'st sate
As sits the morning star, supremely bright
Amidst the heaven's weak winds and interwoven light.*

And wherefore art thou here? why poured in vain
The tide of war on every wasted plain,
Till Europe's farthest torrent to the sea
Rolled crimson with the price of victory?

* *Amidst the heaven's weak winds.*—For the first part of this line I must solicit the indulgence of its astronomical judges. For testimony to the truth of the epithet *interwoven*, I must appeal to the observation of all who are in the habit of walking before breakfast. The fleecy clouds of a fine morning are almost always subject to the influence of two or more atmospherical currents, acting at right angles to each other; so that they resemble a bright warp and woof, which, since by reflecting the horizontal rays it gives all its brilliancy to the sky, may itself be considered as light.

For the opinions expressed in this passage I hope no lengthened apology will be thought necessary. Surely, could his ambition have been restrained, the government of Napoleon was peculiarly adapted to the genius of the French nation. His power was sufficient to check their restlessness, because it was based on their vanity, and his powerful intellect, wherever it turned (and it turned everywhere), called into action innumerable energies which had before been wasted in frivolity and indolence. The memorials of his influence, which remain all over Europe, seem to show us that his power, even if unchecked, would have been based, unlike other tyrannies, on the prosperity of the nation which he governed.

Thy doom was sealed, dark spirit, at thy birth,
Out of the black, cold ruin of the earth,
When phrenzied France stood fierce amidst the cry
Of her fair children in their agony.
Mocking, by lifeless street and temple gate,
God's image, and His altar desecrate.
Might it not seem that Deity had sent
An angry spirit through the firmament,
Which went forth, like a tempest, to provide
Graves for the atheist and the homicide;
Which underneath its feet, like stubble, trod
Those who had shown no mercy, feared no God;
(Till murder felt the falchion's vengeful edge,
And silence dwelt where once was sacrilege;)
Swept from their place the guilty sire and son,
Then sunk itself, its fated mission done,
And withered to mortality? Farewell,
Thou breath of battle! Ocean like a knell
Rings hollow on the shore. No more for thee
Shall love avail, or ancient constancy.
It comes, the end of mortal hope and ill,
The passing pain and the enduring chill:
The silver cord is loosed, the golden bowl
Is broken at the fountain; the dark soul
To God, who gave it, hath returned again,
And worms feed sweetly on the fear of men.
Ambition! this thy kingdom is not wide;
Glory! thy home is dark,—thine lowly, Pride.

O Majesty! thy robes of pomp are pale;
O Strength! thy hand is colder than its mail.
Ambition, Power, Pride, Majesty, we trust
Together. Earth to earth and dust to dust.

Yet who dares smile, above his coffin-lid,
At this, the end of all he dreamed and did;
Or o'er the mighty dead, with unmoved eyes
Severely speak or coldly moralise?
Point, for his precept stern, the sage may find
In frequent fates and masses of mankind;
And reason still from like to like, and trace
The human frailty, as the human face:
Here let him pause, nor use example vain
Of what has been, but shall not be again;
Nor teach the tribes of mortals to condemn
A mightier soul, for what were crime in them;
Nor try, by measure to *his* thoughts confined,
The error of unfathomable mind.
Here let him pause, where rocks of silence hold
The hopes of thousands, in one coffin cold;
And stranger stars, that beamed not on his birth,
Bedew the darkness of the deathful earth.
Ocean! keep calmness on thy bursting brine;—
Lo! here lies hushed a wilder war than thine.
Strengthen thy shackles, Grave! they'll quake to keep
Thy captive's breast from heaving in its sleep.
Cities and nations! join the burial-hymn
O'er the cold passion and the lowly limb:

Meet here, ye kings! with reverend steps and slow
Come singing; God hath lifted, and laid low.

And thou! the chosen weapon of His will,
The hope of England once, her glory still,—
Thine is no fame, by dark-eyed slaughter nursed,
Of man lamented, and of God accursed;
Thine was no path of devastating war,
No evil triumph of the blood-stained car;
But thine the high and holy lot, to rear
The sacred olive-branch, where shook the spear;
To bid tumultuous nations rest, and pour
A light of peace o'er each exulting shore.
And England, pointing to her chiefest pride,
Her guard in battle, and in peace her guide,
Boasts not so much in thee,—and those who stood,
With thee, to sign their bonds of love with blood,—
The victor's forceful hand, and heart of steel,
As the stern patriot's calm and quenchless zeal.
Oh! when, in future days, the minds of men
Shall call dead nations to the field again,
Where, o'er the ghastly wreck of war's array,
Pale Clio points a dark and dreadful way,—
How shall thy memory 'midst her records rise
Soft in its light, though glorious is its guise!
How shall the noblest part of men be stirred
By thy name, in their spirits sepulchred! *

* *In their spirits sepulchred.*—Καὶ τὸν τάφον ἐπισημότατον, οὐκ ἐν ᾧ κεῖνται μᾶλλον, ἀλλ' ἐν ᾧ ἡ δόξα αὐτῶν ἀείμνηστος καταλείπειται.—*Thucyd.* ii. 43.

Oh! long as, proudly throned among the free,
Britannia sits upon the silver sea,—
That name shall lighten, like a lordly gem,
Bound in the brightness of her diadem;
Taught by her daughters of the golden hair,
Young lips shall frame it with unconscious care;
Her youthful sons shall start the sound to hear,
Grasp the keen falchion and the glittering spear:
Their voice even age's torpor shall beguile;
Warmed with his thoughts, the grey-haired sire shall smile,
And bless the hero's name and glory-guarded isle.

[*Before March* 31.]

THE RECREANT.

In an attack of the Athenians upon the Æginetæ, the former were cut off, with the exception of one man, who went home to tell the tale. He was met in the street of the city by a group of Athenian women, each of whom, inquiring where he had left her husband, wounded him with the clasp of her robe until he died.—*Herodotus, Terpsichore*, Book v. ch. 87.

WITH the hills of their fathers around them,
The heaven of their country above,
They stood in the strength of their manhood,
They went in the light of our love.
In the pride of their power they departed,
Down by the path of the sea;
Dark eyes of the desolate-hearted
Were watching for them and for thee!

Who comes from the banquet of blood,
Where the guests are as still as a stone?
Who dares to return by the road,
Where the steps of his joy are *alone?*
They were bound by the oath of the free,
They were true as the steel that they bare;
They were true to themselves and to thee,
Behold! *thou* hast left them—and where?

Oh! well has their triumph been told,
In the time of its terrible crowning;
Poor recreant! kingly, though cold,
Is the sleep that thou durst not lie down in.
The swords of the restless are rusted
In the rest that thou shrankest to share;
False helot! to whom hast thou trusted
The pride of the peaceful—and where?

For thee, who wast not of the number
That sank in the red battle-shade,
Thy name shall be cursed in the slumber
Of the life that thy baseness betrayed.
The strength of the tremorless tread
Of our bravest, our love can resign;
But tears, as of blood, shall be shed
For the dastard returning of thine.

But what! when thy soul hath not hearkened
To the charge of our love or our fear,
Shall the soft eyes of Hellas be darkened
By the thought of thy birth or thy bier?
The strength of thy shame shall requite thee;
The souls of the lost shall not see
Mother nor maid of the mighty
Shed a tear for a dastard like thee.

THE WRECK.

ITS masts of might, its sails so free,
Had borne the scatheless keel
Through many a day of darkened sea,
And many a storm of steel;
When all the winds were calm, it met
(With home-returning prore)
With the lull
Of the waves
On a low lee shore.

The crest of the conqueror
On many a brow was bright;
The dew of many an exile's eye
Had dimmed the dancing sight;
And for love and for victory,
One welcome was in store,
In the lull
Of the waves
On a low lee shore.

The voices of the night are mute
Beneath the moon's eclipse;

The silence of the fitful flute
Is on the dying lips.
The silence of my lonely heart
Is kept for evermore
In the lull
Of the waves
On a low lee shore.

ARISTODEMUS AT PLATÆA.

Of two Spartans who were prevented by illness from taking part in the battle of Thermopylæ, and who were, in consequence, degraded to the level of Helots, one, unable to endure the scorn of his countrymen, killed himself; the other, by name Aristodemus, waited, and when, at the battle of Platæa, thirty-three thousand allied Greeks stood to receive the final and desperate attack of three hundred thousand chosen Asiatics, and the Spartans, unused to Persian arms, hung slightly back, he charged alone, calling to his countrymen to "follow the coward,"—broke the enemy's mass,—and was found, when the victorious Greeks who followed him had laid two hundred thousand of their enemy dead on the field, lying on a low hillock, with his face turned up to heaven,—a group of the Persian nobles slaughtered around him. He was refused the honours of burial, because, it was said, he was only courageous in despair.

I.

YE have darkened mine honour and branded my name,
Ye have quenched its remembrance in silence and shame;
Yet the heart ye called craven, unbroken, hath borne
The voice of your anger,—the glance of your scorn.

II.

But the life that hath lingered is now in mine hand;*
My waiting was but for a lot of the land,

* 1 Sam. xxviii. 21; Job xiii. 14.

Which His measure, who ruleth the battle array,
May mete for your best and your bravest to-day.

III.

My kinsmen,—my brothers,—your phalanx is fair;
There's a shield, as I think, that should surely be there;
Ye have darkened its disk, and its hour hath drawn near,
To be reared as a trophy, or borne as a bier.*

IV.

What said I? Alas, though the foe in his flight
Should quit me, unspoiled, on the field of the fight,
Ye will leave me to lie, with no hand to inurn,
For the dog to devour, or the stranger to spurn!

V.

What matter? Attendants my slumber shall grace,
With blood on the breast and with fear on the face;
And Sparta may own that the death hath atoned
For the crime of the cursèd, whose life she disowned.

VI.

By the banks of Eurotas her maidens shall meet,
And her mountains rejoice in the fall of your feet;
And the cry of your conquest be lofty and loud,
O'er the lengthened array of the shield,—or the shroud.

* If his body were obtained by the enemy, it would be reared as a trophy; if recovered by his friends, borne as a bier; unless, as he immediately called to mind, they should deny him funeral honours.

VII.

And the fires of the grave shall empurple the air,
When they lick the white dust of the bones ye shall bear;
The priest and the people, at altar and shrine,
Shall worship their manes, disdainful of mine.

VIII.

Yet say that *they* fought for the hopes of their breast,—
For the hearts that had loved them,—the lips that had blessed;
For the roofs that had covered,—the country that claimed,
The sires that had named them,—the sons they had named.

IX.

And say that *I* fought for the land of the free,
Though its bosom of blessing beat coldly for me;
For the lips that had cursed me,—the hearts that had scorned,
And the desolate hope of the death unadorned.

SONG.

I.

WE care not what skies are the clearest,
What scenes are the fairest of all;
The skies and the scenes that are dearest
For ever, are those that recall
To the thoughts of the hopelessly-hearted,
The light of the dreams that deride,
With the form of the dear and departed,
Their loneliness weary and wide.

II.

The beauty of earth or of ocean
Dies darkly, and withered away,
If they rouse no remembered emotion
By the light of their lifeless array;
By the thoughts which we cannot dissever
From the place where their loveliness rose,
Is the unbroken seal set for ever
On the place of their passioned repose.

III.

Thou knowest—sweet shade of my spirit!
That the changes of time or of scene

RYDAL - WATER.

August. 1838

May mock me—but none disinherit
Remembrance of that which has been;
With the July wind's Indian story
Come dreams of the winter-scathed tree;
With the flush of Creation's high glory,
Of the place that was hallowed by thee.

IV.

Though it now may be dark and deserted,
It hath thoughts that I cannot resign;
My glance is not vainly reverted
To the spot that was lightened by thine;
Remember—whate'er thou hast taken,
Thou hast left me a throb and a thrill;
And the heart which it seemed was forsaken
Is round thee, and dwells with thee still.

SONG.

I.

THOUGH thou hast not a feeling for one
  Who is torn by too many for thee;
Yet oh! not entirely unknown
  To thy heart can the agony be
Of him whom thou leftest alone
  By the green and cold surge of the sea.

II.

Thine eye may gleam bright through thy tresses,—
  It hath not a grief to deplore;—
Thy lips, in their speaking caresses,
  May be lovely and light as of yore:—
None love them as he did, who blesses
  Their motion and music no more.

III.

Oh! ask of the thoughts that illume
  Thy heart in the hour of its pride,—
Though the flush of thy beauty may bloom

Where the throne of its worship is wide,—
Who loves it, as he did, to whom
Alone it is ever denied!

IV.

The thoughts, to whose sceptre resistance
Is mockery,—compass their slave;
Not even from that desolate distance,
Beyond the wild depth of the wave,
Can the presence that gave them existence,
Departed—bequeath them a grave.

HORACE:—"ITER AD BRUNDUSIUM."

THE gust sung soft and well, as if to keep
My wakening lulled—although it banished sleep;
From sluggish waters, in the moonlit marsh,
The midnight reptiles' cry came low and harsh;
Beneath my window, where the turf was kind,
A weary traveller on his cloak reclined,—
Sought the sweet rest his fevered dream denied,—
Stirred, as in fear, or as in sorrow sighed.
My muleteer, slow pacing, drove his team
Up to a lilied meadow, which a stream
Kept verdant,—where a myrtle thicket grew,
Shading its softness from the damp, cold dew;
(Through the close leaves entangled starlight fell
On twining rose and orient asphodel;)
And, as he urged the lingering mules along,
Cheered and beguiled his moonlit way with song;—
Singing the glancing eye and glossy shade
Of the dark tresses of his mountain maid:
Remembering how, upon their parting day,
She turned her sad and soul-like eyes away;
Yet left their look, to bind him with its spell,
When her lips trembled in the faint Farewell!

MEMORY.

THE Summer wind is soft and kind
The midnight leaves among,
And perfumed power, by wind and flower,
Is on its wild wings flung;
And harp-like notes of music meet
Its viewless hand and whispering feet.

Oh! memory, like that breeze of night,
Can soothe a darker gloom,
And, from the flowers of lost delight,
Awake the weak perfume.
Faint, sad, and sweet the echoes call
In answer to her footsteps' fall.

But Winter's breath is chill as death,
And hushed his lifeless sky;
Though on the ground comes saddening sound
Of leaves that dancing die;
And all the earth that heaven looks on
Is widely waste, and weakly wan.

But winter comes not o'er the heart,
  Where memory doth not die;
There is much sorrow in her smile,
  More soothing in her sigh;
And her deep glance is bright with rays,—
The light of long departed days.

THE NAME.

I.

HE was a strange, yet gentle youth,
The meaning of whose mind was made
Half of vision, half of truth;
The dream a sun—the truth a shade;
But, of the strange and fitful flame
That once aroused his fiery frame
To thought or passion—work—or will,
This only is remembered still:
He loved a name.

II.

He loved a name. Perchance he found
Its syllables were sweet of sound;
Or called at once on ear and eye
The thrill of a lost memory;
Or o'er the heart, that no one knew,
Came like the south wind, dropping dew,
To mock its early hope and hue.
Some called the name—and, saying, smiled—
A name of nothing. But it seemed
That, like a night-bewildered child

Awaked from fancies wan and wild,
He pined for what he dreamed.

III.

He loved a name: and frequent wept
To hear a careless lip expressing
The love that, like an echo, slept
In chasms of his soul, and kept
It full of visionary blessing.
Alas! that any dared to claim
Possession of the secret name,
Or violate, with stranger-tone,
The sound he fancied all his own.

IV.

He loved it—as grief loves the tomb,
That is her memory's bourne and bower
He feared the lips of those to whom
He dared not own its passioned power.
Their breath came like the dead Simoom
Across the beauty and the bloom
Of his unfading flower.
Yet would he oft, with secret tone,
Breathe it to himself alone,
O'er and o'er, and smile—and yet
His lip was pale, his eye was wet;
Perchance because he could not see
The sound of its sweet company.

Poor fool! at last he met it, where
It left him darkness and despair;
Even graved on the pavement pale
Of a long and lone cathedral aisle,
On a flat, cold slab of narrow stone,
With the damp and the dimness of earth thereon;
Worn by the foot—scorned by the eye,
Of the calm and careless passer-by.
It was sculptured clear on the marble grey,
Under a star of the tinted light;
His weeping was wild that dreary day,—
His sleeping was sound that night.

52435

CANZONET.

I.

THE winter's chill hath charmed the wave,
The wasted leaves have left the bough,
The pale stars give the light they gave
When thou wast—where thou art not now.
Oh! as the frail and lonely lute,
Whose chords are cold, whose music mute,
This heart is left alone by thee,
Who wert its only melody.

II.

Oh! say with whom shall now be spent
The hours that once were spent with thee?
Whose every pause is eloquent
Of what has been and cannot be:
A form is near me—known, how well!—
A voice is round me like a spell.
Thou comest—it mocks me. Vision vain!
Thou wilt not, shalt not, come again.

III.

Canst thou yet come to fill this heart
With the same voice, and mood, and mien?

Oh! if to know what now thou art
Were to forget what thou hast been,
The soul that loved thee must be chill
And changed, if it could love thee still.
Oh! darkly would it dread to deem
What once was memory—now a dream.

IV.

I would not that these hours were spent
Even with thyself—if not the same;
If to be true to her who went,
Were to be false to her who came.
Deep in this heart's most silent place
Their gentle path those hours shall trace.
Think'st thou an hour can ever be
Spent there, and yet not spent with thee?

FRAGMENT FROM A METEOROLOGICAL JOURNAL.

SIX days the mist was breathed into the sky,
From the pale lips of the earth—most silently.
It was a cheerful mist—and the young Frost
Played strangely in the Starlight, which, half lost,
Crept in white cords among the icy hair
Of the faint Midnight; while the moveless air
Fashioned, with fingers fine, the gathering slow
Of frost-work clear and wreaths of swan-like snow.
The mist was full of voices musical—
The laugh of merry children—the shrill call
Of the slow ploughboy from the furrows brown—
Tinkling of bells upon the breezy down,
Where following sheep tread bleating, and the cry
Of shepherd-dogs, that bark for company—
And song of winter-birds, that still repeat
The notes which desolation makes so sweet.
But on the seventh day there came a wind
From the far south, whose voice was low and kind;
And the mist felt its feet tread where they went—
Yielding before them—all obedient;

And by their passing, a slow chasm was riven
In the grey clouds; and the deep silent heaven
Gazed down in the pure essence of its love—
Kindling the earth with blessing from above,
Yet sad—exceeding sad; and one lone star,
Tearful and pale as hopes of sorrow are,
Far in the west, seemed smiling as it sate,
As one, whose mourning is left desolate,
Doth smile at consolation.

Thus it is
That we would gladden with forgetfulness
The heart, whose memory maddens us; and weave
A mist of thoughts and voices which may leave
Nothing that once was rosy-wreathèd joy,
To pale and wither into agony.
Yet evermore—its beauty veiled in vain—
The past—the lost—the loved—looks forth again.
Oh! happier far to hail the grief that keeps
The thoughts that Memory blesses, as she weeps,
Yet feebly, softly smiles, to see, to know
Her unforgotten joy—her hope of long ago.

CANZONET.

I.

THERE'S a change in the green of the leaf,
And a change in the strength of the tree;
There's a change in our gladness or grief,—
There may be a change upon thee.
But love—long bereft of thee,
Hath a shade left of thee;
Swift and pale hours may float
Past—but it changeth not.

II.

As a thought in a consecrate book,
As a tint in the silence of air,
As the dream in the depths of the brook,
Thou art there.
When we two meet again,
Be it in joy or pain,
Which shall the fairest be,—
Thou—or thy memory?

THE MIRROR.

I.

It saw, it knew thy loveliness,
Thy burning lip and glancing eye,
Each lightning look, each silken tress
Thy marble forehead braided by,
Like an embodied music, twined
About a brightly breathing mind.

II.

Alas! its face is dark and dim;
No more its lightless depth below
That glancing eye shall seem to swim,
That brow to breathe or glow;
Its treacherous depth—its heartless hue—
Forgets the form that once it knew.

III.

With many a changing shape and face
Its surface may be marked and crossed—
Portrayed with as distinct a grace
As thine, whose loveliness is lost;
But there's one mirror, good and true,
That doth not lose what once it knew.

IV.

My thoughts are with that beauty blest,
A breathing, burning, living vision,
That, like a dove with wings at rest,
Still haunts the heart it makes Elysian;
And days and times pass like a sleep
Softly sad, and still, and deep;
And, oh! what grief would wakening be
From slumber bright with dreams of thee!

SONG OF THE TYROLESE AFTER THE BATTLE OF BRIXEN.*

OH! the pause of silent dread
After rush of battles holy!
Lo! the spirits of the dead
From the field are floating slowly;
Dense the mist reeks, full of life
From the blood-hot place of strife,
Where our noblest, bravest, lie so lowly.
But there's pride in the gasp of our conquerors' breath,
Though their laurels be wreathed by the fingers of Death;
There's a smile on the lip that is ceasing to quiver,
And a flash in the eye that is freezing for ever.

Beneath the sacred sod they lie on
Lay we our triumphant brave;
This land they loved to live and die on,
And o'er their honourable grave
Shall blossoms burst of brilliant hue,
And softly shall distil the dew,
And mountain pines umbrageous darkly wave;

* In which Hofer obtained a complete victory.

The stars shall look down from the heaven most brightly,
Where the bones of the brave are, the moon will watch nightly;
Like the Alp that is reddest at set of the sun,
Brightest in death is the glory they've won;
Our shouting the hymn at their burial shall be—
Oh! a soldier sleeps well in a land that is free!

A SCYTHIAN BANQUET SONG.

The Scythians, according to Herodotus, made use of part of their enemies' bodies after death for many domestic purposes; particularly of the skull, which they scalped, wrapped in bull's hide, and filled up the cracks with gold; and, having gilded the hide and parts of the bone, used the vessel as a drinking-cup, wreathing it with flowers at feasts.

I.

I THINK my soul was childish yet,
When first it knew my manhood's foe;
But what I was, or where we met,
I know not—and I shall not know.
But I remember, now, the bed
On which I waked from such sick slumber
As, after pangs of powerless dread,
Is left upon the limbs like lead,
Amidst a calm and quiet number
Of corpses, from whose cold decay
Mine infant fingers shrank away;
My brain was wild, my limbs were weak,
And silence swallowed up my shriek—
Eleleu.

II.

Alas! my kindred, dark and dead,
Were those from whom I held aloof;
I lay beneath the ruins red
Of what had been my childhood's roof;
And those who quenched its wasted wood,
As morning broke on me and mine,
Preserved a babe baptized in blood,
And human grief hath been its food,
And human life its wine.
What matter?—those who left me there
Well nerved mine infant limbs to bear
What, heaped upon my haughty head,
I might endure—but did not dread.

Elelcu.

III.

A stranger's hand, a stranger's love,
Saved my life and soothed my woe,
And taught my youth its strength to prove,
To wield the lance and bend the bow.
I slew the wolf by Tyres'* shore,
I tracked the pard by chasm and cliff;
Rich were the warrior-spoils I wore;
Ye know me well, though now no more
The lance obeys these fingers stiff;
My hand was strong, my hope was high,
All for the glance of one dark eye;

* Tyres, a river of Scythia, now the Dneister.

The hand is weak, the heart is chill—
The glance that kindled, colder still.
Elelcu.

IV.

By Tyres' banks, like Tyres' wave,
The hours of youth went softly by;
Alas! their silence could not save
My being from an evil eye:
It watched me—little though I knew
The wrath around me rising slow,
Nor deemed my love, like Upas dew,
A plague, that where it settled, slew.
My time approached; I met my foe:
Down with a troop he came by night,*
We fought them by their lances' light;
On lifeless hearth, and guardless gate,
The dawn of day came desolate.
Elelcu.

V.

Away, away—a Persian's slave,
I saw my bird of beauty borne,
In wild despair, too weak to save,
Too maddening to mourn.
There dwells a sound within my brain
Of horses' hoof-beat swift and hollow
Heard, when across the distant plain,

* There were frequent incursions made by the Persians upon the Scythians before the grand invasion of Darius.

Elaira stretched her arms in vain
To him whose limbs were faint to follow.
The spoiler knew not, when he fled,
The power impending o'er his head;
The strength so few have tameless tried,
That love can give for grief to guide.
Elelcu.

VI.

I flung my bow behind my back,
And took a javelin in my hand,
And followed on the fiery track
Their rapine left upon the land.
The desert sun in silence set,
The desert darkness climbed the sky;
I knew that one was waking yet,
Whose heart was wild, whose eye was wet,
For me and for my misery;—
One who had left her glance of grief,
Of earthly guides my chosen and chief;
Through thirst and fear, by wave and hill,
That dark eye watched and wooed me still.
Elelcu.

VII.

Weary and weak—their traces lost,—
I roved the brazen cities * through,

* *Brazen cities.*—Brass was a material much used by the Persians in their large edifices. The cities alluded to are those on the south shore of the Hellespont, under Persian Satraps.

That Helle's undulating coast
Doth lift beside its billows blue;
Till, in a palace-bordered street,
In the dusk starlight of the day,
A stalkless flower fell near my feet,
Withered and worn, yet passing sweet;
Its root was left—how far away!
Its leaves were wet—though not with dew;
The breast that kept, the hand that threw,
Were those of one who sickened more
For the sweet breeze of Tyres' shore.
Eleleu.

VIII.

My tale is long. Though bolts of brass
Heed not their captive's faint upbraiding,
They melt like wax, they bend like grass
At sorrow's touch, when love is aiding;
The night was dim, the stars were dead,
The drifting clouds were grey and wide;
The captive joined me and we fled;
Quivering with joy, though cold with dread,
She shuddered at my side.
We passed the streets—we gained the gate,
Where round the wall its watchers wait;
Our steps beneath were hushed and slow,—
For the third time—I met my foe.
Eleleu.

IX.

Swift answering as his anger cried,
Came down the sworded sentinels:
I dashed their closing spears aside;
They thicken, as a torrent swells,
When tempests feed its mountain source:
O'er-matched, borne down, with javelins rent,
I backed them still with fainting force
Till the life curdled in its course,
And left my madness innocent.
The echo of a maiden's shriek
Mixed with my dreaming long and weak,
And when I woke, the daybreak fell
Into a dark and silent cell.

Eleleu.

X.

Know ye the price that must atone,
When power is mocked at by its slave?
Know ye the kind of mercy shown,
When pride condemns, though love would save?
A sullen plash was heard that night
To check the calm of Helle's flow;
And there was much of love and light
Quenched, where the foam-globes moved most white,
With none to save and few to know.
Me they led forth, at dawn of day,
To mock, to torture, and to slay;

They found my courage calm and mild,
Until my foe came near, and smiled.

Elelcu.

XI.

He told me how the midnight chasm
Of ocean had been sweetly fed;
He paled—recoiling, for a spasm
Came o'er the limbs they deemed were dead:
The earth grew hot—the sky grew black—
The twisted cords gave way like tow;
I felt the branding fetters crack,
And saw the torturers starting back,
And more I do not know,
Until my stretched limbs dashed their way
Through the cold sea's resulting spray,
And left me where its surges bore
Their voices to a lifeless shore.

Eleleu.

XII.

Mine aged eyes are dim and dry;
They have not much to see or mourn,
Save when, in sleep, pale thoughts pass by—
My heart is with their footsteps worn
Into a pathway. Swift and steep
Their troops pass down it—and I feel not—
Though they have words would make me weep
If I could tell their meaning deep—
But *I* forget—and *they* reveal not:

Oh, lost Elaira!—when I go
Where cold hands hold the soundless bow,
Shall the black earth, all pitiless,
Forget the early grave
Of her, whom beauty did not bless,
Affection could not save?

Eleleu.

XIII.

Oh, lost Elaira! long for thee
Sweet Tyres' banks have blushed in vain;
And blight to them and death to me
Shall break the link of memory's chain.
My spirit keeps its lonely lair
In mouldering life to burn and blacken;
The throbs that moved it once are there
Like winds that stir a dead man's hair,
Unable to awaken.
Thy soul on earth supremely smiled,
In beauty bright, in mercy mild;
It looked to love—it breathed to bless—
It died, and left me—merciless.

Eleleu.

XIV.

And men shrink from me, with no sense
That the fierce heart they fear and fly,
Is one whose only evidence
Of beating is in agony.

They know, with me, to match or melt,
The sword or prayer alike are vain:
The spirit's presence, half unfelt,
Hath left,—slow withering where it dwelt,
One precedence of pain.
All that my victims feel or fear
Is well avenged by something here;
And every curse they breathe on me
Joins in the deep voice of the sea.

Eleleu.

XV.

It rolls—it coils—it foams—it flashes,
Pale and putrid—ghastly green;
Lit with light of dead men's ashes
Flickering through the black weed's screen.
Oh! there, along the breathless land,
Elaira keeps her couch allotted;
The waters wave her weary hand,
And toss pale shells and ropy sand
About her dark hair clasped and clotted;
The purple isles are bright above
The frail and moon-blanched bones of love;
Their citron breeze is full of bliss—
Her lips are cool without its kiss.

Eleleu.

XVI.

My thoughts are wandering and weak;
Forgive an old man's dotard dreaming;

I know not, sometimes when I speak,
  Such visions as have quiet seeming.
I told you how my madness bore
  My limbs from torture. When I woke,
I do remember something more
Of wandering on the wet sea-shore,
  By waving weed and withered rock,
Calling Elaira, till the name
Crossed o'er the waters as they came—
Mildly—to hallow and to bless
Even what had made it meaningless.
Eleleu.

XVII.

The waves, in answering murmurs mixed,
  Tossed a frail fetter on the sand;
Too well I knew whose fingers fixed,
  Whose arm had lost the golden band:
For such it was, as still confines
  Faint Beauty's arm, who will not listen
The words of love,—that mockery twines
To soothe the soul that pants and pines
  Within its rose-encumbered prison.
The waters freed her; she who wore
Fetter or armlet needs no more:
Could the waves tell, who saw me lift—
For whom I kept—their glittering gift?
Eleleu.

XVIII.

Slow drifts the hour when Patience waits
  Revenge's answering orison;
But—one by one, the darkening Fates
  Will draw the balanced axle on,
Till torture pays the price of pride,
  And watches wave, with sullen shine,
The sword of sorrow, justified.
The long years kept their quiet glide,
  His hour was past: they brought me mine;
When, steed to steed, and rank to rank,
With matchèd numbers fierce and frank,
(The war-wolves waiting near to see
Our battle bright) my Foe met Me.
  Ha—Hurra!

XIX.

As the tiger tears through the jungle reeds,
  As the west wind breaks through the sharp corn-ears,
As the quick death follows where the lightning leads,
  Did my dark horse bear through the bended spears;
And the blood came up to my brain like a mist,
  With a dark delight and a fiery feel;
For the black darts hailed, and the javelins hissed,
To the corpses clasped in their tortured twist,
  From mine arms like rain from the red-hot steel.
Well went the wild horses—well rode their lords—
Wide waved the sea of their circling swords;

But down went the wild steeds—down went the sea—
Down went the dark banners—down went He.
Ha—Hurra!

XX.

For, forward fixed, my frenzy rushed
To one pale plume of fitful wave;
With failing strength, o'er corses crushed,
My horse obeyed the spurs I gave.
Slow rolled the tide of battle by,
And left me on the field alone;
Save that a goodly company
Lay gazing on the bright blue sky,
All as stiff as stone.
And the howling wolves came, merry and thick,
The flesh to tear and the bones to pick:
I left his carcass, a headless prize,
To these priests of mine anger's sacrifice.
Ha—Hurra!

XXI.

Hungry they came, though at first they fled
From the grizzly look of a stranger guest—
From a horse with its hoof on a dead man's head,
And a soldier who leaned on a lance in his breast.
The night wind's voice was hoarse and deep,
But there were thoughts within me rougher,
When my foiled passion could not keep
His eyes from settling into sleep
That could not see, nor suffer.

He knew his spirit was delivered
By the last nerve my sword had severed,
And lay—his death pang scarcely done,
Stretched at my mercy—asking none.

Eleleu.

XXII.

His lips were pale. They once had worn
A fiercer paleness. For awhile
Their gashes kept the curl of scorn,
But now—they always smile.
A life, like that of smouldering ashes,
Had kept his shadowy eyeballs burning.
Full through the neck my sabre crashes—
The black blood burst beneath their lashes
In the strained sickness of their turning.
By my bridle-rein did I hang the head,
And I spurred my horse through the quick and dead,
Till his hoofs and his hair dropped thick and fresh
From the black morass of gore and flesh.

Ha—Hurra!

XXIII.

My foe had left me little gold
To mock the stolen food of the grave,
Except one circlet: I have told
The arm that lost, the surge that gave.
Flexile it was, of fairest twist:
Pressing its sunlike woven line,
A careless counter had not missed

One pulse along a maiden's wrist,
So softly did the clasp confine.
This—molten till it flowed as free
As daybreak on the Egean sea,
He who once clasped—for Love to sever
And death to lose, received—for ever.

XXIV.

I poured it round the wrinkled brow,
Till hissed its cold, corrupted skin;
Through sinuous nerves the fiery flow
Sucked and scared the brain within.
The brittle bones were well annealed,
A bull's hide bound the goblet grim,
Which backwards bended, and revealed
The dark eye sealed—the set lips peeled:
Look here! how I have pardoned him.
They call it glorious to forgive;
'Tis dangerous, among those that live,
But the dead are daggerless and mild,
And my foe smiles on me—like a child.

XXV.

Fill me the wine! for daylight fades,
The evening mists fall cold and blue;
My soul is crossed with lonelier shades,
My brow is damp with darker dew;
The earth hath nothing but its bed
Left more for me to seek, or shun;

My rage is passed—my vengeance fed—
The grass is wet with what I've shed,
  The air is dark with what I've done;
And the grey mound, that I have built
Of intermingled grief and guilt,
Sits on my breast with sterner seat
Than my old heart can bear, and beat.

Elelcu.

XXVI.

Fill wine! These fleshless jaws are dry
  And gurgle with the crimson breath;
Fill me the wine! for such as I
  Are meet, methinks, to drink with death.
Give me the roses! They shall weave
  One crown for me, and one for him,
Fresher than his compeers receive,
Who slumber where the white worms leave
  Their tracks of slime on cheek and limb.
Kiss me, mine enemy! Lo! how it slips,
The rich red wine through his skeleton lips;
His eye-holes glitter,—his loose teeth shake,
But their words are all drowsy—and will not awake.

XXVII.

That lifeless gaze is fixed on me;
  Those lips would hail a bounden brother;
We sit in love, and smile to see
  The things that we have made each other.

The wreaking of our wrath has reft
  Our souls of all that loved or lightened:
He knows the heart his hand has left,
He sees its calm and closeless cleft,
  And *I*—the bones my vengeance whitened.
Kiss me, mine enemy! Fill thee with wine!
Be the flush of thy revelling mingled with mine;
Since the hate and the horror we drew with our breath
Are lost in forgiveness, and darkened in death.

1839.

AT THE AGE OF 19–20 YEARS.

SALSETTE AND ELEPHANTA: A NEWDIGATE PRIZE POEM, RECITED IN THE THEATRE, OXFORD, JUNE 12, 1839.

THE SCYTHIAN GUEST.

FAREWELL (*September* 1839).

THE BROKEN CHAIN; IN FIVE PARTS (*written* 1839–1842)

SALSETTE AND ELEPHANTA.

A PRIZE POEM.

". . . Religio pedibus subjecta vicissim
Obteritur. Nos exæquat victoria cœlo."—LUCRETIUS, I. 79.

'TIS eve—and o'er the face of parting day
Quick smiles of summer lightning flit and play;
In pulses of broad light, less seen than felt,
They mix in heaven, and on the mountains melt;
Their silent transport fills the exulting air—
'Tis eve, and where is evening half so fair?
Oh! deeply, softly sobs the Indian sea
O'er thy dark sands, majestic Dharavee,*
When, from each purple hill and polished lake,
The answering voices of the night awake
The fitful note of many a brilliant bird,—
The lizard's plunge, o'er distant waters heard,—
The thrill of forest leaves—how soft, how swift!
That floats and follows where the night-winds drift;
Or, piercing through the calmness of the sky,
The jungle tiger's sharp and sudden cry.

* The southern promontory of the island of Salsette.

Yet all is peace, for these weak voices tell
How deep the calm they break, but not dispel.
The twilight heaven rolls on, like some deep stream
When breezes break not on its moving dream;
Its trembling stars continual watches keep,
And pause above Canarah's haunted steep;*
Each in its path of first ascension hid
Behind the height of that pale pyramid,—
(The strength of nations hewed the basalt spire,†
And barbed its rocks like sacrificial fire.)
Know they the hour's approach, whose fateful flight
Was watched of yore from yonder cloudless height?
Lone on its utmost peak, the Prophet Priest
Beheld the night unfolded from the East;
In prescient awe perused its blazing scroll,
And read the records stretched from Pole to Pole.
And though their eyes are dark, their lips are still,
Who watched and worshipped on Canarah's hill,
Wild superstition's visionary power
Still rules and fills the spirit of the hour:
The Indian maiden, through the scented grove,
Seeks the dim shore, and lights the lamp of love;
The pious peasant, awe-struck and alone,
With radiant garland crowns the purple stone,‡

* The central peak of Salsette.

† M. Anquetil du Perron, in his accounts of Canarah, says that its peak appears to have been hewn to a point by human art as an emblem of the solar ray.

‡ "A stone painted with red, and placed at the foot of their favourite tree, is sufficient to call forth the devotion of the poor, who bring to it flowers and simple offerings."—J. S. BUCKINGHAM.

And shrinks, returning through the starlit glade,
When breezes stir the peepul's sacred shade ; *
For well his spirit knows the deep appeal
That love must mourn to miss, yet fear to feel ;
Low sounds, faint rays, upon the senses shed—
The voices of the lost, the dark eyes of the dead.

How awful now, when night and silence brood
O'er Earth's repose and Ocean's solitude,
To trace the dim and devious paths that guide
Along Canarah's steep and craggy side,
Where, girt with gloom—inhabited by fear,—
The mountain homes of India's gods appear !
Range above range they rise, each hollow cave
Darkling as death, and voiceless as the grave ;
Save that the waving weeds in each recess
With rustling music mock its loneliness ;
And beasts of blood disturb, with stealthy tread,
The chambers of the breathless and the dead.
All else of life, of worship, passed away,
The ghastly idols fall not, nor decay ;
Retain the lip of scorn, the rugged frown,
And grasp the blunted sword and useless crown ;
Their altars desecrate, their names untold,
The hands that formed, the hearts that feared — how cold !

* The superstitious feeling of the Indian with respect to the peepul tree is well known. Its shade is supposed to be loved and haunted by the dead.

Thou too—dark Isle! whose shadow on the sea
Lies like the gloom that mocks our memory
When one bright instant of our former lot
Were grief, remembered, but were guilt, forgot.
Rock of the lonely crest! how oft rènewed
Have beamed the summers of thy solitude,
Since first the myriad steps that shook thy shore
Grew frail and few—then paused for evermore!
Answer—ye long-lulled echoes! Where are they
Who clove your mountains with the shafts of day;
Bade the swift life along their marble fly,
And struck their darkness into deity,
Nor claimed from thee—pale temple of the wave—
Record or rest, a glory or a grave?
Now all are cold—the votary as his god,—
And by the shrine he feared, the courts he trod,
The livid snake extends his glancing trail,
And lifeless murmurs mingle on the gale.

Yet glorious still, though void, though desolate,
Proud Dharapori! * gleams thy mountain-gate,
What time, emergent from the eastern wave,
The keen moon's crescent lights thy sacred cave;
And moving beams confuse, with shadowy change,
Thy columns' massive might and endless range.
Far, far beneath, where sable waters sleep,
Those radiant pillars pierce the crystal deep,

* The Indian name for Elephanta.

And mocking waves reflect, with quivering smile,
Their long recession of refulgent aisle;*
As, where Atlantis hath her lonely home,
Her grave of guilt, beneath the ocean's foam;
Above the lifeless hearth and guardless gate,
The wildly-walking surges penetrate,
And sapphire tints of phosphor lightning fall
O'er the broad pillar and the sculptured wall.—
So, Dharapori! through thy cold repose
The flooding lustre of the moonlight flows;
New forms of fear,† by every touch displayed,
Gleam, pale and passioned, through the dreadful shade,
In wreathèd groups of dim, distorted life,
In ghastly calmness, or tremendous strife;
While glaring eye and grasping hand attest
The mocked emotion of the marble breast.
Thus, in the fevered dream of restless pain,
Incumbent horror broods upon the brain;
Through mists of blood colossal shapes arise,
Stretch their stiff limbs, and roll their rayless eyes.

Yet knew not here the chisel's touch to trace
The finer lineaments of form and face;
No studious art of delicate design
Conceived the shape, or lingered on the line.
The sculptor learned, on Indus' plains afar,

* The interior of Elephanta is usually damp, and its floor covered with water two or three feet deep. By moonlight its shallowness would be unperceived.

† The sculptures of Elephanta have such "horrible and fearful formes that they make a man's hayre stande upright."—LINSCHOTEN.

The various pomp of worship and of war;
Impetuous ardour in his bosom woke,
And smote the animation from the rock.
In close battalions kingly forms advance,*
Wave the broad shield, and shake the soundless lance,
With dreadful crest adorned, and orient gem,
Lightens the helm and gleams the diadem;
Loose o'er their shoulders falls their flowing hair
With wanton wave, and mocks the unmoving air;
Broad o'er their breasts extend the guardian zones,
Broidered with flowers and bright with mystic stones;
Poised in æthereal march they seem to swim,
Majestic motion marked in every limb;
In changeful guise they pass—a lordly train,
Mighty in passion, unsubdued in pain;†
Revered as monarchs, or as gods adored,
Alternately they rear the sceptre and the sword.

Such were their forms, and such their martial mien,
Who met by Indus' shore the Assyrian queen,‡
When, with reverted force, the Indian dyed
His javelin in the pulses of her pride,

* "Some of these figures have helmets of a pyramidal form; others wear crowns richly decorated with jewels; others display large bushy ringlets of curled or flowing hair. In their hands they grasp sceptres and shields, the symbols of justice and the ensigns of religion, the weapons of war and the trophies of peace." —MAURICE, *Antiq. of India*, vol. ii. p. 145.

† Many of them have countenances expressive of mental suffering.

‡ Semiramis. M. D'Ancarville supposes the cave to have been excavated by her army; and insists on the similarity between the costume of the sculptured figures and that of her Indian adversaries. See *D'Ancarville*, vol. i. p. 121.

And cast, in death-heaps, by the purple flood,
Her strength of Babylonian multitude.

And mightier ones are there—apart—divine,
Presiding genii of the mountain-shrine:
Behold, the giant group, the united three,
Faint symbol of an unknown Deity!
Here, frozen into everlasting trance,
Stern Siva's quivering lip and hooded glance;
There, in eternal majesty serene,
Proud Brahma's painless brow and constant mien;
There glows the light of Veeshnu's guardian smile,
But on the crags that shade yon inmost aisle
Shine not, ye stars! Annihilation's lord *
There waves, with many an arm, the unsated sword;
Relentless holds the cup of mortal pain,
And shakes the spectral links that wreathe his ghastly chain.

Oh! could these lifeless lips be taught to tell
(Touched by Chaldean art or Arab spell)
What votaries here have knelt, what victims died,—
In pangs, their gladness, or in crimes, their pride,—
How should we shun the awful solitude,
And deem the intruding footsteps dashed in blood!
How might the altar-hearths grow warm and red,
And the air shadowy with avenging dead!
Behold!—he stirs—that cold, colossal king!—

* Alluding to a sculpture representing the evil principle of India: he seems engaged in human sacrifice, and wears a necklace of skulls.

'Tis but the uncertain shade the moonbeams fling;
Hark! a stern voice awakes with sudden thrill!—
'Twas but the wandering wind's precarious will:
The distant echo dies, and all the cave is still.

Yet fancy, floating on the uncertain light,
Fills with her crowded dreams the course of night;
At her wild will æthereal forms appear,
And sounds, long silent, strike the startled ear:
Behold the dread Mithratic rite reclaim *
Its pride of ministers, its pomp of flame!
Along the winding walls, in ordered row,
Flash myriad fires—the fretted columns glow;
Beaming above, the imitative sky
Extends the azure of its canopy,
Fairest where imaged star and airy sprite
Move in swift beauty and entrancing light;
A golden sun reflected lustre flings,
And wandering Dewtahs † wave their crimson wings;
Beneath, fed richly from the Arabian urn,
Undying lamps before the altar burn;
And sleepless eyes the sacred sign behold,
The spiral orb of radiated gold;

* Throughout the description of the rites of Mithra, I have followed Maurice, whose indefatigable research seems almost to have demonstrated the extreme antiquity, at least, of the Elephanta cavern, as well as its application to the worship of the solar orb and of fire. For a detailed account of this worship, see MAURICE, *Indian Antiq.*, vol. ii. sec. 7.

† Inferior spirits of various power and disposition, holding in the Hindoo mythology the place of angels. They appear in multitudes on the roof of the Elephanta cavern.

On this the crowds of deep-voiced priests attend,
To this they loudly cry, they lowly bend;
O'er their wan brows the keen emotions rise,
And pious phrenzy flashes from their eyes·
Phrenzy in mercy sent, in torture tried,
Through paths of death their only guard and guide,
When, in dread answer to their youth's appeal,
Rose the red fire and waved the restless steel,*
And rushed the wintry billow's wildest wreck,—
Their God hath called them, and shall danger check?
On—on—for ever on, though, roused in wrath,
Glare the grim lion on their lonely path;
Though, starting from his coiled malignant rest,
The deadly dragon lift his crimson crest;
Though corpse-like shadows round their footsteps flock,
And shafts of lightning cleave the incumbent rock;
On, for behold, enduring honours wait
To grace their passage through the golden gate;
Glorious estate, and more than mortal power,
Succeed the dreadful expiating hour;
Impurpled robes their weary limbs enfold
With stars enwoven, and stiff with heavenly gold;

* Alluding to the dreadful ceremonies of initiation which the priests of Mithra were compelled to undergo, and which seem to have had a close correspondence with the Eleusinian mysteries. See MAURICE, *Antiq. of India*, vol. v. p. 620.

† The sidereal metempsychosis was represented in the Mithratic rites by the ascent of a ladder, on which there were seven gates: the first of lead, representing Saturn; the second of tin, Venus; the third brass, Jupiter; the fourth iron, Mercury; the fifth mixed, Mars; the sixth silver, the Moon; the seventh of gold, the Sun.

The mitra * veils their foreheads, rainbow-dyed,
Their measured steps imperial sceptres guide;
Glorious they move, and pour upon the air
The cloud of incense and the voice of prayer;
While through the hollow vault, around them rise
Deep echoes from the conch of sacrifice,
In passioned gusts of sound,—now loud, now low,
With billowy pause, the mystic murmurs flow
Far dwindling on the breeze. Ere yet they die
Canarah hears, and all his peaks reply;
His crested chasms the vocal winds explore,
Waste on the deep, and wander on the shore.
Above, the starry gloom is thrilled with fear,
The forests shake, the circling hamlets hear,
And wake to worship. Many an isle around,
Assembling votaries swell the sacred sound,
And, troop by troop, along the woodland ways,
In equal measures pour responsive praise:
To Mithra first their kindling songs addressed,
Lull his long slumbers in the watery west;
Next to the strength of each celestial sign
They raise the choral chaunt, the breathing line;
Keen through the arch of heaven their hymns arise,
Auspicious splendours deck the answering skies.
The sacred cohorts, maddening as they sing,

* The attire of Mithra's priests was splendid: the robes of purple, with the heavenly constellations embroidered on them in gold. They wore girdles representative of the zodiacal circle, and carried a golden sceptre in the form of a serpent. Ezekiel speaks of them as "exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads" (xxiii. 15).

Far through the air their flashing torches fling;
From rock to rock the rushing glories leap,
Climb the wide hills, and clothe the central steep,
Till through the endless night a living line
Of lustre opens on the bounding brine;
Ocean rejoices, and his isles prolong,
With answering zeal, those bursts of flame and song,
Till the strong vulture on Colombo's peak
Awakes with ruffled plume and startled shriek,
And the roused panther of Almorah's wood
Howls through his violated solitude.

'Tis past,—the mingled dream,—though slow and grey
On mead and mountain break the dawning day;
Though stormy wreaths of lingering cloud oppress
Long time the winds that breathe—the rays that bless,—
They come, they come. Night's fitful visions fly
Like autumn leaves, and fade from fancy's eye;
So shall the God of might and mercy dart
His day-beams through the caverns of the heart;
Strike the weak idol from its ancient throne,
And vindicate the temple for His own.
Nor will He long delay. A purer light
Than Mithra cast shall claim a holier rite;
A mightier voice than Mithra's priests could pour
Resistless soon shall sound along the shore;

Its strength of thunder vanquished fiends shall own
And idols tremble through their limbs of stone.

Vain now the lofty light—the marble gleam—
Of the keen shaft that rose by Gunga's stream!
When round its base the hostile lightnings glowed,
And mortal insult mocked a god's abode,
What power, Destroyer,* seized with taming trance
Thy serpent sceptre and thy withering glance?
Low in the dust, its rocky sculptures rent,
Thine own memorial proves thee impotent.
Thy votaries mourn thy cold unheeding sleep,
Chide where they praised, and where they worshipped, weep.

Yes! he shall fall, though once his throne was set
Where the high heaven and crested mountains met;
Though distant shone with many an azure gem
The glacier glory of his diadem;
Though sheets of sulphurous cloud and wreathèd storm
Cast veil of terror round his shadowy form.
All, all are vain! It comes, the hallowed day,
Whose dawn shall rend that robe of fear away;

* Siva. This column was dedicated to him at Benares; and a tradition prevailed among his worshippers, that as soon as it should fall, one universal religion would extend over India, and Brahma be no more worshipped. It was lately thrown down in a quarrel between the Hindoos and Mussulmans. (See *Heber's Journal.*) Siva is spoken of in the following lines, as representative of Hindoo deities in general. His worship seems to have arisen in the fastnesses of the Himalayas, accompanied with all the gloomy features characteristic of the superstitions of hill-countries.

Then shall the torturing spells that midnight knew
Far in the cloven dells of Mount Meru,
Then shall the moan of phrenzied hymns, that sighed
Down the dark vale where Gunga's waters glide,
Then shall the idol chariot's thunder cease
Before the steps of them that publish peace.
Already are they heard,—how fair, how fleet,
Along the mountains flash their bounding feet!
Disease and death before their presence fly;
Truth calls, and gladdened India hears the cry,
Deserts the darkened path her fathers trod,
And seeks redemption from the Incarnate God.

THE SCYTHIAN GUEST.

When the master of a Scythian family died, he was placed in his state chariot, and carried to visit every one of his blood-relations. Each of them gave him and his attendants a splendid feast, at which the dead man sat at the head of the table, and a piece of everything was put on his plate. In the morning he continued his circuit. This round of visits generally occupied nearly forty days, and he was never buried till the whole number had elapsed. I have taken him at about six days old, when a little phosphoric light might play about his skin in the dark, and yet the corruption would not, in a cool country, have made anything shapeless or decidedly unpleasant. See HERODOTUS, *Melpomene*, 73.

I.

THE feast is full, the guests are gay,
Though at his lance-illumined door
Still must the anxious master stay;
For, by the echoing river shore,
He hears the hot and hurrying beat
Of harnessed horses' flying feet,
And waits to watch and yearns to greet
The coming of the brave.
Behold! like showers of silver sleet,
His lines of lances wind and wave:
He comes as he was wont to ride
By Hypanis' war-troubled tide,

When, like the west wind's sternest stoop,
Was the strength of his tempestuous troop,
And when their dark steeds' shadows swift
Had crossed the current's foamless drift,
The light of the river grew dazzled and dim,
With the flash of the hair and the flight of the limb.

II.

He comes—urged on by shout and lash,
His favourite courser flies;
There's frenzy in its drooping dash,
And sorrow in its eyes.
Close on its hoofs the chariots crash,
Their shook reins ring—their axles flash—
The charioteers are wild and rash;
Panting and cloven the swift air feels
The red breath of the whirling wheels,
Hissing with heat, and drunk with speed
Of wild delight, that seems to feed
Upon the fire of its own flying;
Yet he for whom they race is lying
Motionless in his chariot, and still,
Like one of weak desire or fettered will.
Is it the sun-lulled sleep of weariness
That weighs upon him? Lo! there is no stress
Of slumber on his eyelids—some slow trance
Seems dwelling on the darkness of his glance;
Its depth is quiet, and its keenness cold
As an eagle's quenched with lightning—the close fold

Of his strong arms is listless, like the twine
Of withered weeds along the waving line
Of flowing streams; and o'er his face a strange
Deep shadow is cast, which doth not move nor change.

III.

At the known gate the coursers check,
With panting breast and lowly neck:
From kingly group, from menial crowd,
The cry of welcome rings aloud:
It was not wont to be so weak,—
Half a shout and half a shriek,
Mixed with the low yet penetrating quiver
Of constrained voices, such as creep
Into cold words, when, dim and deep
Beneath, the wild heart's death-like shiver
Mocks at the message that the lips deliver.

IV.

Doth he not hear? Will he not wake?
That shout of welcome did not break,
Even for an instant, on the trace
Of the dark shadow o'er his face.
Behold, his slaves in silence lift
That frame so strong, those limbs so swift,
Like a sick child's; though half erect
He rose when first his chariot checked,
He fell—as leaves fall on the spot
Where summer sun shall waken not

The mingling of their veined sensation
With the black earth's wormy desolation.
With stealthy tread, like those that dread
To break the peace of sorrow's slumber,
They move, whose martial force he led,
Whose arms his passive limbs encumber;
Through passage and port, through corridor and court,
They hold their dark, slow-trodden track:
Beneath that crouching figure's scowl
The household dogs hang wildly back,
With wrinkled lip and hollow howl;
And on the mien of those they meet,
Their presence passes, like the shadow
Of the grey storm-cloud's swirling sheet,
Along some soft sun-lighted meadow;
For those who smiled before they met
Have turned away to smile no more;
Even as they pass, their lips forget
The words they wove—the hues they wore;
Even as they look, the eyes grow wet
That glanced most bright before!

V.

The feast is ranged, the guests are met;
High on the central throne
That dark and voiceless Lord is set,
And left alone;
And the revel is loud among the crowd,
As the laugh on surges free,

Of their merry and multitudinous lips,
When the fiery foamlight skims and skips
Along the sounding sea.
The wine is red and wildly shed,
The wreathèd jest is gaily sped,
And the rush of their merriment rises aloof
Into the shade of the ringing roof;
And yet their cheeks look faint and dead,
And their lips look pale and dry;
In every heart there dwells a dread,
And a trouble in every eye.

VI.

For sternly charmed or strangely chill,
That lonely Lord sits stiff and still,
Far in the chamber gathered back,
Where the lamps are few and the shadows are black;
So that the strained eye scarce can guess
At the fearful form of his quietness,
And shrinks from what it cannot trace,
Yet feels, is worse than even the error
That veils, within that ghastly space,
The shrouded form and shadowed face
Of indistinct, unmoving terror.
And the life and light of the atmosphere
Are choked with mingled mist and fear,
Something half substance and half thought,—
A feeling, visibly inwrought
Into the texture of the air;

And though the fanned lamps flash and flare
Among the other guests—by Him
They have grown narrow, and blue, and dim,
And steady in their fire, as if
Some frigid horror made them stiff.
Nor eye hath marked, nor ear hath heard
That form, if once it breathed or stirred;
Though the dark revel's forcèd fits
Penetrate where it sleeps and sits;
But this, their fevered glances mark
Ever, for ever, calm and dark;
With lifeless hue and changeless trace,
That shadow dwells upon his face.

VII.

It is not pain, nor passion, but a deep
Incorporated darkness, like the sleep
Of the lead-coloured anger of the ocean,
When the heaven is fed with death, and its grey motion
Over the waves, invisible—it seems
Entangled with the flesh, till the faint gleams
Of natural flush have withered like the light
Of the keen morning, quenched with the close flight
Of thunder; and beneath that deadly veil
The coldness of the under-skin is pale
And ghastly, and transparent as—beneath
Some midnight vapour's intertwinèd wreath—
Glares the green moonlight; and a veinèd fire
Seems throbbing through it, like a dim desire

Felt through inanimation, of charmed life
Struggling with strong sick pants of beaming strife,
That wither and yet warm not:—through its veins
The quenched blood beats not, burns not, but dark stains
Of congealed blackness, on the cheek and brow,
Lie indistinct amidst their frightful shade;
The breathless lips, like two thin flakes of snow,
Gleam with wan lines, by some past agony made
To set into the semblance of a smile,
Such as strong-hearted men wear wildly, while
Their souls are twined with torture; calm and fixed,
And yet distorted, as it could not be
Had not the chill with which it froze been mixed
With twitching cords of some strong agony.
And the white teeth gleam through the ghastly chasm
Of that strange smile; close clenched, as the last spasm
Of the wrung nerves has knit them; could they move,
They would gnash themselves to pieces; from above
The veiling shadow of the forehead falls,
Yet, with an under-glare, the fixed balls
Of the dark eyes gleam steadily, though not
With any inward light or under-thought,
But casting back from their forgetful trance,
To each who looks, the flash of his own glance;
So that each feels, of all assembled there,
Fixed on himself, that strange and meaning glare
Of eyes most motionless; the long dark hair
Hangs tangled o'er the faded features' gloom,
Like withered weeds above a mouldering tomb,

Matted in black decay; the cold night air
Hath stirred them once or twice, even as despair
Plays with the heart's worn chords, that last retain
Their sense of sorrow and their pulse of pain.

VIII.

Yet strike, oh! strike the chorded shell,
And let the notes be low and skilled;
Perchance the words he loved so well
May thrill as once they thrilled.
That deadened ear may still be true
To the soft voice that once it knew;
And the throbs that beat below the heart,
And the joys that burn above,
Shall bid the light of laughter dart
Along the lips of love.
Alas! those tones are all untold
On ear and heart so closed and cold;
The slumber shall be sound,—the night—how long!
That will not own the power of smile or song;
Those lips of love may burn, his eyes are dim;
That voice of joy may wake, but not for him.

IX.

The rushing wine, the rose's flush,
Have crowned the goblet's glancing brim;
But who shall call the blossom's blush,
Or bid the goblet flow for him?

For how shall thirst or hunger's heat
  Attend the sunless track,
Towards the cool and calm retreat,
From which his courser's flashing feet
  Can never bear him back?
There, by the cold, corpse-guarded hill,
The shadows fall both broad and still;
There shall they fall at night,—at noon,
  Nor own the daystar's warning;
Grey shades, that move not with the moon,
  And perish not with morning.

X.

Farewell, farewell, thou Presence pale!
  The bed is stretched where thou shouldst be;
The dawn may lift its crimson veil,—
  It doth not breathe, nor burn for thee.
The mien of might, the glance of light,
  That checked or cheered the war's career,
Are dreadless in the fiery fight,
  Are dreadful only *here*.
Exulting hatred, red and rife,
  May smile to mark thine altered brow;
There are but those who loved in life,
  Who fear thee, now.
Farewell, farewell, thou Presence pale!
  The couch is near where thou shouldst be;
Thy troops of Death have donned their mail,
  And wait and watch for thee.

FAREWELL.

πόθῳ δ' ὑπερπουτίας
φάσμα δόξει δόμων ἀνάσσειν . . .
ὀνειρόφαντοι δὲ πενθήμονες
πάρεισιν δοκαὶ, φέρουσαι χάριν ματαίαν . . .
βέβακεν ὄψις, οὐ μεθύστερον
πτεροῖς ὀπαδοῖς ὕπνου κελεύθοις.
[ÆSCHYLUS, *Agamemnon*, 414–424.]

I.

FAREWELL! that glance so swift, so bright,
Was lightly given, but not in vain;
For, day by day, its visioned light
Must burn within my brain;
And this shall be our sole farewell:—
Let silence guard, with calm control,
The grief my words were weak to tell,
And thine unable to console.

II.

Let silence guard—alas! how long
The stillness of the heart shall be,
Taught to conceal the secret wrong
That should be told to thee.

Oh! hear me, ere the hour be past,
That stands between me and my fear;
And mock not at my words, the last
These lips may frame for thee to hear.

III.

Farewell! a darkness and a dread
Have checked my heart and chilled my brow;
And there are tears which must be shed —
Oh! deeply, wildly, but not now.
While thou art near, I would not weep:
They come,—they come, the lonely years,
Whose wings of desolation keep
Enough of time for tears.

IV.

Think not this bitterness can cease,
When these first throbs have burst their way;—
Alas! this parting is like peace,
Beside the pangs of dark delay,
That round my spirit move and brood,
Day after day, a gloomier host,
Encompassing the solitude,
Whence thou art longer lost.

V.

I had strange visible thoughts when last I slept:
The crowded pangs of passion sunk and crept

Into the woof of a delirious dream:
A vision of cold earth and silent air,
Though it had that which might methinks redeem
Death from its darkness,—thou wast there,
As thou art always when the speed
Of the keen stars is full and free;
Their light along mine eyes can lead
The glory of thy memory:
My slumber must be death indeed
When it forgets to dream of thee.

VI.

And yet it was a strange dim dream:—
I drifted on a mute and arrowy stream,
Under the midnight, in a helmless boat,
That lay like a dead thing cast afloat
On the weight of the waves; I could feel them come,
Many and mighty, but deep and dumb;
And the strength of their darkness drifted and drew
The rudderless length of that black canoe,
As the west wind carries a fragment rent
From a thunder-cloud's uppermost battlement.

VII.

And this black boat had one expanded sail,
All woven of wan light, narrow and pale;
It clove the dense illimitable shade
Like a sheet of keen white fire; the wind, that made

Its motion, became luminous, and glowed
Through its transparent folds, in silence taking
Glory, and giving life; then failed and flowed
Back to the gloom; with many a moan forsaking
The bosom of that sail so wildly woven,
By whose swift path the lifeless night was cloven
As by a whirling spear; beneath, the river
Repeated its white image,—a faint quiver
Of lifelike undulation rose for ever
Through its pure warp, like crystal waves that wake
Beneath the pale path of the water-snake,
When the green fireflakes through the kindled ocean
Flash from the swiftness of his sunlit motion.

VIII.

And thus I drifted, impotently sent
Down the dim strength of that wild element:
No memory behind, nor light before;
No murmur from the wave, no voices from the shore;
That shore was indistinct and desolate,
Though I could see, between me and the sky,
The black boughs of broad trees, on which the weight
Of leafage was all quiet, dead, and dry;
And they did twine themselves above my head
In clasped contortions, even as if the death
Had wrung their sapless strength, and visited
Their withering leaves with agony: beneath,
Broad weeds, in many an intertangled fold,
Heavy with dew, hung motionless and cold,

Clogging the arrowy waves with their green mass,
Mixed with moist threads of wild and sunless grass,
Whose passive undulation I could feel
Quiver beneath the boat's retarded keel.
And ever from above, the branches through,
Together fell the dead leaves and the dew:
The dew upon my brow fell chill and mute;
The leaves upon the wave, as on a lute
The fingers of a child; and where they smote,
The waters uttered an irregular note,
Subdued into strange music, as the feet
Of mourners fall in a deserted street.

IX.

And thus we drifted on—my boat and I,
Until there passed a thrill along the sky,
As of a silent wind; it clove the gloom
Asunder as our souls shall cleave the tomb:
Day dropped from its wide wings, the heaven, unveiled,
Grew glorious in the west, and I beheld
That twilight lay behind me; and, below
The paleness of its presence, there did glow
Far chains of kindling mountain-peaks, which flung
The splendour from their brows, like morning dew
Dashed from an eagle's wings; their ravines hung
In purple folds from heaven: the windless blue
Of deep wide waters slumbered at their feet;
I saw the beauty of their peace repeat
An indistinct and visionary shore,

Whose glory, though untraced, I felt, or knew
Had been familiar once, though never more
To mingle with my soul; the lustre grew
Faint in the arch of heaven; the bright wind slept,
The darkness came upon me, and I wept;
Again—again it wakened, and anew
Gleamed the far shore; faint odours came and crept
Over my senses; the dark current kept
The souls of the crushed flowers in unison
With its own motion, yet they died away.
I saw the closing shadows, fast and grey,
Sink back upon the hills, but not for ever;
Thrice did the force of that far twilight sever
The cumbrous clouds; and thrice my moon-like sail
Glowed with new glory; thrice the hills did veil
Their sides with purple fire; but its third close
Was swiftest, and the place whence it arose
Grew cold in heaven, as human hearts with pain—
I watched for its return, and watched in vain.

X.

And I was left alone, but not below
The boughs of that thick forest; for the flow
Of the strong tide had borne my bark within
A silent city, where its surge could win
Refuge of rest, in many an arched recess,
Pierced in the wide walls of pale palaces;
Grey dwellings, echo haunted, vast and old,

So lifeless, that the black wave's iciest beat
Felt like warm kisses to their marble cold;
So shadowy, that the light, which from the sheet
Of my fair sail passed down that river-street,
Could scarcely bid the domes it glided by
Strike their wan tracery on the midnight sky.

XI.

And this was passed, and through far-opening meadows
That pinnace by its fire-fed sail was guided
Where sparkled out star-flowers among the shadows
That dwell upon their greenness, undivided.
A sickness came across my heart—a stress
Of a deep, wild, and death-like happiness,
Which drank my spirit, as the heaven drinks dew,
Until my frame was feeble; then I knew,
Beloved, I was near thee. The silence fell
From the cold spirit of the earth; I heard
The torpor of those melodies, that dwell
In the gladness of existence, newly stirred;
And the roused joy of many a purple bird
Sprang upwards, cleaving, through the burning foam
Of the dawn clouds, a path to its blue home;
Till, as its quivering ecstasy grew strong,
It paused upon its plumes,—the shower of song
Falling like water over its wide wings.
The leaves of the thick forest moved like strings
Of a wild harp; a sound of life did pass

Through the fresh risen blades of the pale grass,
And filled its hyacinthine bells, and grew
Thrilling and deep within their hollow blue.
Even the black motion of the waters glowed
With that new joy—they murmured as they flowed;
And, when I heard the inarticulate sense
Of all things waked with that strange eloquence,
I knew thy spirit made them sing and shine,—
Their gleaming beauty was but flashed from thine;
It passed into my soul, and did renew
That deathfulness of deep delight. I knew,
Beloved, I was near thee. I saw thee stand
On a white rock above that mighty stream,
Motionless, with the mien of mild command,
Worn but by the most beautiful; the gleam
Of thy bright hair fell o'er thy quiet brow,
With such keen glory as the golden East
Pours on the drifted clouds that float and flow
Round some pure island of moon-fallen snow;
And on thy parted lips, the living glow
Was gathered in one smile—how calm, how slow.
How coldly fixed, how infinitely fair!
Its light fell quivering through the midnight air,
As the swift moonbeams through a kindling sea,—
Beaming it fell, oh! wherefore not on me?
I saw it wake the night-flowers at thy feet,
Even till their odorous pulses breathed and beat;
It fell on the cold rocks, and on the free
Unfeeling waves,—oh! wherefore not on me?

XII.

And yet thine eye was on me; undesigned
Fell, as it seemed, that glance so coldly kind,
With just as much of mercy in its ray
As might forbid its light to turn away—
To turn from him to whom that glance was all
His hope could promise or his grief recall;
Whose loss must leave such night as can reveal
No farther pang on earth for him to feel.
And yet it dwelt on me,—how dark, how deep,
That soul-like eye's unfathomable sleep!
So sleeps the sunless heaven of holiest height,
When meteors flash along the calm of night;
Rise through its voiceless depths of kindling blue,
And melt and fall in fire suffused with dew.
On me, on me,—oh! deeper, wilder yet—
Mine eyes grew dim beneath the glance they met;
My spirit drank its fire as weak winds drink
The intense and tameless lightning, till they sink,
Lost in its strength: it pierced my soul, until
That soul lay lost, and faint, and deadly still,—
Lost in the mingled spasm of love and pain,
As an eagle beaten down by golden rain
Of sunset clouds along the burning sky:
Oh! turn away, belovèd, or I die!
Thou didst not turn; my heart could better brook
The pride, than pity, of thy steadfast look;
Steeled to its scornful flash, but not to see

Its milder darkness melt, and melt for me.
I had not much to bear; the moment's spark
Of pity trembled, wavered, and was dark.
It left the look which even love must fear,
Which would be cold, if it were not severe.

XIII.

Those black resistless waves my bark that bore,
Paused in thy presence by the illumined shore—
Paused, but with gathering force and wilder tone,
They rose, foamed, murmured, thundered, and dashed on—
On, in the lonely gloom, and thou the while
Didst gaze with that irrevocable smile,
Nor heed the claspèd hand and bitter cry—
The wild appeal of my vain agony:
One cry, one pang,—it was enough to fill
My heart, until it shuddered and was still—
Mute with the grief that deadly trance forgot—
Cold, as thy spirit that regarded not:
A moment more, the water's voice was thrown
Like laughter in mine ears,—I was alone.

XIV.

Alone, alone! and I was calm, nor knew
What quiet it could be that did subdue
All passion and all pain with its deep stress.
Mine eyes were dry, my limbs were motionless;

My thoughts grew still and shadowy on the brain;
The blood grew waveless in the heart and vein;
I had no memory, no regret, no dread,
Nor any other feeling, which the dead
Have not, except that I was cold as they
Can be, and know not of it. Far away
The waters bore me through long winding caves
Of sunless ice, among whose chasms the waves
Gurgled in round black pools, that whirled between
The splintered ice-crag's walls of ghastly green,
Shattered and cloven in dreadful forms, whose height
Cast fearful streams of strange and lifeless light,
Veiled with worse horror by the quivering ray,
Like dead things lighted by their own decay;
And round their summits grey wreathed clouds were twined,
Which were still torn to pieces, without wind,
And tossed and twisted in the soundless air,
Like tortured thoughts, rebellious in despair.
And through their gloom I saw vague forms arise,
Living, but with pale limbs and lightless eyes;
And some were cruel in their mien, and wild;
And some were mournful, and a few were mild;
And some were—what mine eyes could not behold;
And some were beautiful; but all were cold:
And those that were most ghastly ever grew
Into a stronger group of life; the few
Who were, or pure, or beautiful, did hide
Their faces in each other's breasts, and died;

And quivering fire rose upward from their death,
Which the foul forms that lived drank in like breath;
Making their own existence mightier: none
Remained but those I could not look upon;
And in that fear I woke. The moon was set,
Dawn came; oh! would that it were darkness yet!
Day only drew me from that dream of ill,
To make me feel how much it could fulfil—
Scattered the trance, to make the truth succeed,
And bid the lost in sleep be lost indeed.
Far o'er the earth the beams of beauty shine;
The eyes of hope may welcome them,—not mine.
Hark! as the kindling splendours broader break,
The thousand voices of the earth awake:
The sounds of joy on other lips may dwell;—
That dawn hath but one word for mine—farewell!

XV.

Farewell! but not for ever—now
The marks of pain are on my brow;
Once more we have to part, and thou
Shalt marvel in thy pride to see
How very calm that brow can be.
Once more! then through the darkness deep
The stream of life may swirl and sweep;
I shall not fear, nor feel, nor weep;
My soul, upon those billows rolled,
Shall only know that it is cold.

XVI.

That vision told, how much of truth!
For as I saw the day-beam break
Behind me thrice on vale and lake,
So, thrice along the hills of youth
Thy form my path has crossed;
It left the light too brief to bless,
Too deeply loved, too darkly lost,
For hope or for forgetfulness.

XVII.

Yet thou shalt come the seal to set
That guards the scroll of pleasures past;
One joy, one pang, is wanting yet,—
The loveliest, wildest,—both the last.
I see thee come with kindling cheek,
And 'wildering smile, and waving hair,
And glancing eye, whose flash can speak
When lips are cold and words are weak.
And what are these to my despair?
But things to stir with sobs the sleep
That should be dreamless, deadliest deep,
From each imprisoned pang to melt
The fetters forged in vain;
And bid the ghastly life befelt,
We can but feel by pain;
To make the soul they cannot save
Heave wildly in its living grave;

And feel the worms that will not cease
To feed on—what should have been peace.

XVIII.

Yet come—and let thy glance be dim,
And let thy words be low;
Then turn—for ever turn—from him
Whose love thou canst not know;—
And reck not of the faithful breast,
Whose thoughts have now no home—nor rest—
That wreathed, with unregarded light,
Thy steps by day, and sleep by night.
Then when the wildest word is past,
And when mine eyes have looked their last,
Be every barrier earth can twine
Cast in between my soul and thine—
The wave, the wild, the steel, the flame,
And all that word or will can frame:
When God shall call or man shall claim,
Depart from me, and let thy name
Be uttered in mine ears with dread,
As only meaning—what is dead—
Like some lost sound of long ago,
That grief is learning not to know;
And I will walk the world as one
Who hath but little left to feel;
And smile to see affection shun
The moveless brow and heart of steel:

Thou in thy pride alone shalt know
What left them lifeless years ago;
Thou mayst recall the pang, the hour,
That gave my soul that pain of power;
And deem that darkened spirit free—
Ay! even from the love of thee.

September 1839.

THE BROKEN CHAIN.

PART FIRST.

I.

IT is most sad to see—to know
This world so full of war and woe,
E'er since our parents' failing duty
Bequeathed the curse to all below,
And left the burning breach of beauty.
Where the flower hath fairest hue,
Where the breeze hath balmiest breath,
Where the dawn hath softest dew,
Where the heaven hath deepest blue,
There is death.
Where the gentle streams of thinking,
Through our hearts that flow so free,
Have the deepest, softest sinking
And the fullest melody ;
Where the crown of hope is nearest,
Where the voice of joy is clearest,
Where the heart of youth is lightest,
Where the light of love is brightest,
There is death.

II.

It is the hour when day's delight
  Fadeth in the dewy sorrow
Of the star-inwoven night ;
And the red lips of the west
Are in smiles of lightning drest,
  Speaking of a lovely morrow :
But there's an eye in which, from far,
The chill beams of the evening star
  Do softly move and mildly quiver ;
Which, e'er the purple mountains meet
The light of morning's misty feet,
  Will be dark—and dark for ever.

III.

It was within a convent old,
  Through her lips the low breath sighing,
Which the quick pains did unfold
With a paleness calm, but cold,
  Lay a lovely lady dying.
As meteors from the sunless north
  Through long, low clouds illume the air.
So brightly shone her features forth
  Amidst her darkly tangled hair ;
And, like a spirit, still and slow,
  A light beneath that raven veil
Moved,—where the blood forgot to glow,
As moonbeams shine on midnight snow,

So dim,—so sad,—so pale:
And, ever as the death came nearer,
That melancholy light waxed clearer;
It rose, it shone, it never dwindled,
As if in death it could not die;
The air was filled with it, and kindled
As souls are by sweet agony.
Where once the life was rich and red,
The burning lip was dull and dead,
As crimson cloud-streaks melt away,
Before a ghastly darkened day.
Faint and low the pulses faded,
One by one, from brow and limb;
There she lay—her dark eyes shaded
By her fingers dim;
And through their paly brightness burning
With a wild, inconstant motion
As reflected stars of morning
Through the crystal foam of ocean.
There she lay—like something holy,
Moveless—voiceless, breathing slowly,
Passing, withering, fainting, failing,
Lulled, and lost, and unbewailing.

IV.

The abbess knelt beside, to bless
Her parting hour with tenderness,
And watched the light of life depart,
With tearful eye and weary heart;

And, ever and anon, would dip
Her fingers in the hallowed water,
And lay it on her parching lip,
Or cross her death-damped brow,
And softly whisper—"Peace, my daughter,
For thou shalt slumber softly now."
And upward held, with pointing finger,
The cross before her darkening eye;
Its glance was changing, nor did linger
Upon the ebon and ivory;
Her lips moved feebly, and the air
Between them whispered—not with prayer!
Oh! who shall know what wild and deep
Imaginations rouse from sleep,
Within that heart, whose quick decay
So soon shall sweep them all away.
Oh! who shall know what things they be
That tongue would tell—that glance doth see;
Which rouse the voice, the vision fill,
Ere eye be dark, and tongue be still.

V.

It is most fearful when the light
Of thoughts, all beautiful and bright,
That through the heart's illumination
Darts burning beams and fiery flashes,
Fades into weak wan animation,
And darkens into dust and ashes;

And hopes, that to the heart have been
As to the forest is its green,
(Or as the gentle passing by
Of its spirits' azure wings
Is to the broad, wind-wearied sky;)
Do pale themselves like fainting things,
And wither, one by one, away,
Leaving a ghastly silence where
Their voice was wont to move and play
Amidst the fibres of our feeling,
Like the low and unseen stealing
Of the soft and sultry air;
That, with its fingers weak, unweaves
The dark and intertangled hair
Of many moving forest-leaves;
And, though their life be lost, do float
Around us still, yet far remote,
And come at the same call, arranged
By the same thoughts; but oh, how changed!
Alas! dead hopes are fearful things,
To dwell around us, for their eyes
Pierce through our souls like adder-stings;
Vampyre-like their troops arise,
Each in his own death entranced,
Frozen and corpse-countenanced;
Filling memory's maddened eye
With a shadowed mockery,
And a wan and fevered vision,
Of her loved and lost Elysian;

Until we hail, and love, and bless
The last, strange joy, where joy hath fled,
The last one hope, where hope is dead,
The finger of forgetfulness;
Which, dark as night, and dull as lead,
Comes across the spirit, passing
Like a coldness through night-air;
With its withering wings effacing
Thoughts that lived or lingered there;
Light, and life, and joy, and pain,
Till the frozen heart rejoices,
As the echoes of lost voices
Die, and do not rise again;
And shadowy memories wake no more
Along the heart's deserted shore;
But fall and faint away, and sicken
Like a nation fever-stricken,
And see not, from the bosom reft,
The desolation they have left.

VI.

Yet, though that trance be still and deep,
It will be broken, ere its sleep
Be dark and unawaked—for ever;
And from the soul quick thoughts will leap
Forth like a sad, sweet-singing river,
Whose gentle waves flow softly o'er
That broken heart,—that desert shore;
The lamp of life leaps up, before

Its light be lost, to live no more;
Ere yet its shell of clay be shattered,
And all the beams it once could pour
In dust of death be darkly scattered.

VII.

Alas! the stander-by might tell
That lady's racking thoughts too well;
The work within he might descry
By trembling brow and troubled eye,
That as the lightning, fiery fierce,
Strikes chasms along the keen ice-plain,
The barbed and burning memories pierce
Her dark and dying brain.
And many mingled visions swim
Within the convent-chamber dim;
The sad twilight, whose lingering lines
Fall faintly through the forest pines,
And with their dusky radiance lume
That lowly bed and lonely room,
Are filled, before her earnest gaze,
With dazzling dreams of bygone days.
They come—they come—a countless host,
Forms long unseen, and looks long lost,
And voices loved,—not *well* forgot,
Awake, and seem, with accents dim,
Along the convent air to float;
That innocent air, that knoweth not
A sound, except the vesper hymn.

VIII.

'Tis past—that rush of hurried thought—
The light within her deep, dark eye
Was quenched by a wan tear, mistily,
Which trembled, though it lightened not,
As the cold peace, which all may share,
Soothed the last sorrow life could bear.
What grief was that—the broken heart
Loved to the last, and would not part?
What grief was that, whose calmness cold
By death alone could be consoled?
As the soft hand of coming rest
Bowed her fair head upon her breast,
As the last pulse decayed, to keep
Her heart from heaving in its sleep,
The silence of her voice was broken,
As by a gasp of mental pain:
"May the faith thou hast forgotten
Bind thee with its broken chain."
The Abbess raised her, but in vain;
For, as the last faint word was spoken,
The silver cord was burst in twain,
The golden bowl was broken.

PART SECOND.

I.

The bell from Saint Cecilia's shrine
Had tolled the evening hour of prayer;
With tremulation far and fine,
It waked the purple air:
The peasant heard its distant beat,
And crossed his brow with reverence meet:
The maiden heard it sinking sweet
Within her jasmine bower,
And treading down, with silver feet,
Each pale and passioned flower:
The weary pilgrim, lowly lying
By Saint Cecilia's fountain grey,
Smiled to hear that curfew dying
Down the darkening day:
And where the white waves move and glisten
Along the river's reedy shore,
The lonely boatman stood to listen,
Leaning on his lazy oar.

II.

On Saint Cecilia's vocal spire
The sun had cast his latest fire,

Sunset at Baveno.
1845.

And flecked the west with many a fold
Of purple clouds o'er bars of gold.
That vocal spire is all alone,
Albeit its many winding tone
Floats waste away—oh! far away,
Where bowers are bright and fields are gay;
That vocal spire is all alone,
Amidst a secret wilderness,
With deep, free forest overgrown;
And purple mountains, which the kiss
Of pale-lipped clouds doth fill with love
Of the bright heaven that burns above·
The woods around are wild and wide,
And interwove with breezy motion;
Their bend before the tempest-tide
Is like the surge of shoreless ocean;
Their summer voice is like the tread
Of trooping steeds to battle bred;
Their autumn voice is like the cry
Of a nation clothed with misery;
And the stillness of the winter's wood
In as the hush of a multitude.

III.

The banks beneath are flecked with light,
All through the clear and crystal night;
For as the blue heaven, rolling on,
Doth lift the stars up one by one.

Each, like a bright eye through its gates
Of silken lashes dark and long,
With lustre fills, and penetrates,
Those branches close and strong;
And nets of tangled radiance weaves
Between the many-twinkling leaves,
And through each small and verdant chasm
Lets fall a flake of fire,
Till every leaf, with voiceful spasm,
Wakes like a golden lyre.
Swift, though still, the fiery thrill
Creeps along from spray to spray,
Light and music, mingled, fill
Every pulse of passioned breath,
Which, o'er the incense-sickened death
Of the faint flowers, that live by day,
Floats like a soul above the clay,
Whose beauty hath not passed away.

IV.

Hark! hark! along the twisted roof
Of bough and leafage, tempest-proof,
There whispers, hushed and hollow,
The beating of a horse's hoof,
Which low, faint echoes follow,
Down the deeply-swarded floor
Of a forest aisle; the muffled tread,
Hissing where the leaves are dead,

Increases more and more;
And lo! between the leaves and light,
  Up the avenue's narrow span,
There moves a blackness, shapèd like
  The shadow of a man.
Nearer now, where through the maze
Cleave close the horizontal rays:
It moves,—a solitary knight,
Borne with undulation light
  As is the windless walk of ocean,
On a black steed's Arabian grace,
Mighty of mien, and proud of pace,
  But modulate of motion.
O'er breast and limb, from head to heel,
Fall flexile folds of sable steel;
Little the lightning of war could avail,
If it glanced on the strength of the folded mail.
The beaver bars his visage mask,
  By outward bearings unrevealed;
He bears no crest upon his casque,
  No symbol on his shield.
Slowly, and with slackened rein,
Either in sorrow, or in pain,
Through the forest he paces on,
  As our life does in a desolate dream,
When the heart and the limbs are as heavy as stone,
  And the remembered tone and moony gleam
Of hushed voices, and dead eyes,
Draw us on the dim path of shadowy destinies.

V.

The vesper chime hath ceased to beat,
And the hill-echoes to repeat
  The trembling of the argent bell.
What second sounding—dead and deep,
And cold of cadence—stirs the sleep
  Of twilight with its sullen swell?
The knight drew bridle, as he heard
Its voice creep through his beaver barred,
Just where a cross of marble stood,
Grey in the shadow of the wood,
Whose youngest coppice, twined and torn,
Concealed its access worship-worn:
It might be chance—it might be art,
  Or opportune, or unconfessed,
But from this cross there did depart
  A pathway to the west;
By which a narrow glance was given,
To the high hills and highest heaven,
To the blue river's bended line,
And Saint Cecilia's lonely shrine.

VI.

Blue, and baseless, and beautiful,
  Did the boundless mountains bear
  Their folded shadows into the golden air.
The comfortlessness of their chasms was full

Of orient cloud and undulating mist,
Which, where their silver cataracts hissed,
Quivered with panting colour. Far above
A lightning pulse of soundless fire did move
In the blue heaven itself, and, snake-like, slid
Round peak, and precipice, and pyramid;
White lines of light along their crags alit,
And the cold lips of their chasms were wreathed with it,
Until they smiled with passionate fire; the sky
Hung over them with answering ecstasy:
Through its pale veins of cloud, like blushing blood,
From south to north the swift pulsation glowed
With infinite emotion; but it ceased
  In the far chambers of the dewy west.
There the weak day stood withering, like a spirit
  Which, in its dim departure, turns to bless
Their sorrow whom it leaveth to inherit
Their lonely lot of night and nothingness.
  Keen in its edge, against the farthest light,
The cold, calm earth its black horizon lifted,
  Though a faint vapour, which the winds had sifted
  Like thin sea-sand, in undulations white
And multitudinous, veiled the lower stars.
And over this there hung successive bars
Of crimson mist, which had no visible ending
  But in the eastern gloom; voiceless and still,
Illimitable in their arched extending,
  They kept their dwelling-place in heaven; the chill
Of the passing night-wind stirred them not; the ascending

Of the keen summer moon was marked by them
Into successive steps; the plenitude
Of pensive light was kindled and subdued
Alternate, as her crescent keel did stem
Those waves of currentless cloud; the diadem
Of her companion planet near her, shed
Keen quenchless splendour down the drowsy air;
Glowed as she glowed, and followed where she led,
High up the hill of the night heaven, where
Thin threads of darkness, braided like black hair,
Were in long trembling tresses interwoven.
The soft blue eyes of the superior deep
Looked through them, with the glance of those who cannot weep
For sorrow. Here and there the veil was cloven,
By crossing of faint winds, whose wings did keep
Such cadence as the breath of dreamless sleep
Among the stars, and soothed, with strange delight,
The vain vacuity of the Infinite.

VII.

Stiff as stone, and still as death,
Stood the knight like one amazed,
And dropped his rein, and held his breath,
So anxiously he gazed.
Oh! well might such a scene and sun
Surprise the sudden sight;
And yet his mien was more of one
In dread than in delight.

His glance was not on heaven or hill,
On cloud or lightning, swift or still,
  On azure earth or orient air;
But long his fixèd look did lie
On one bright line of western sky,—
  What saw he there?

VIII.

On the brow of a lordly line
  Of chasm-divided crag, there stood
The walls of Saint Cecilia's shrine.
  Above the undulating wood
Broad, basalt bulwarks, stern and stiff,
Ribbed, like black bones, the grisly cliff.
On the torn summit stretched away
The convent walls, tall, old, and grey;
So strong their ancient size did seem,
  So stern their mountain-seat,
Well might the passing pilgrim deem
  Such desperate dwelling-place more meet
For soldier true, or baron bold,
For army's guard, or bandit's hold,
Than for the rest, deep, calm, and cold,
Of those whose tale of troublous life is told.

IX.

The topmost tower rose narrow and tall,
O'er the broad mass of crag and wall;

Against the streak of western light
It raised its solitary height.
Just above, nor far aloof,
From the cross upon its roof,
Sat a silver star.
The low clouds drifting fast and far,
Gave, by their own mocking loss,
Motion to the star and cross.
Even the black tower was stirred below
To join the dim, mysterious march,
The march so strangely slow.
Near its top, an opening arch
Let through a passage of pale sky
Enclosed with stern captivity;
And in its hollow height there hung,
From a black bar, a brazen bell:
Its hugeness was traced clear and well
The slanting rays among.
Ever and anon it swung
Half-way round its whirling wheel;
Back again, with rocking reel,
Lazily its length was flung,
Till brazen lip and beating tongue
Met once, with unrepeated peal,—
Then paused;—until the winds could feel
The weight of the wide sound, that clung
To their inmost spirit, like the appeal
Of startling memories, strangely strung,
That point to pain, and yet conceal.

Again with single sway it rung,
And the black tower beneath could feel
The undulating tremor steal
Through its old stones, with long shiver.
The wild woods felt it creep and quiver
Through their thick leaves and hushed air,
As fear creeps through a murderer's hair.
And the grey reeds beside the river,
In the moonlight meek and mild,
Moved like spears when war is wild.

X.

And still the knight, like statue, stood
In the arched opening of the wood.
Slowly still the brazen bell
Marked its modulated knell;
Heavily, heavily, one by one,
The dull strokes gave their thunder-tone.
So long the pause between was led
Ere one rose the last was dead—
Dead and lost by hollow and hill.
Again, again, it gathered still.
Ye who hear, peasant or peer,
By all you hope and all you fear,
Lowly now be heart and knee,
Meekly be your orison said
For the body in its agony,
And the spirit in its dread.

XI.

Reverent as a cowlèd monk
The knight before the cross had sunk;
Just as he bowed his helmless head,
Twice the bell struck faint and dead,
And ceased. Hill, valley, and winding shore
The rising roll received no more.
His lips were weak, his words were low,
A paleness came across his brow;
He started to his feet, in fear
Of something that he seemed to hear.
Was it the west wind that did feign
Articulation strange and vain?
Vainly with thine ear thou warrest:
Lo! it comes, it comes again!
Through the dimly woven forest
Comes the cry of one in pain—
"May the faith thou hast forgotten
Bind thee with its broken chain."

PART THIRD.

I.

On grey Amboise's rocks and keep
The early shades of evening sleep,
And veils of mist, white-folded, fall
Round his long range of iron wall;
O'er the last line of withering light
The quick bats cut with angled flight,
And the low-breathing fawns that rest
  The twilight forest through,
Each on his starry flank and stainless breast,
  Can feel the coolness of the dew
Soothing his sleep with heavenly weight.
Who are these who tread so late
Beyond Amboise's castle gate,
  And seek the garden shade?
The flowers are closed, the paths are dark,
Their marble guards look stern and stark,
The birds are still, the leaves are stayed,
On windless bough, and sunless glade.
Ah! who are these that walk so late,
Beyond Amboise's castle gate?

II.

Steep down the river's margin sink
The gardens of Amboise,
And all their inmost thickets drink
The wide low water-voice.
By many a bank whose blossoms shrink
Amidst sweet herbage young and cold,
Through many an arch and avenue,
That noontide roofs with chequered blue,
And paves with fluctuating gold,
Pierced by a thousand paths that guide
Grey echo-haunted rocks beside;
And into caves of cool recess,
Which ever-falling fountains dress
With emerald veils, dashed deep in dew;
And through dim thickets that subdue
The crimson light of flowers afar,
As sweet rain doth the sunset, decked
Themselves with many a living star,
Which music-winged bees detect
By the white rays and ceaseless odour shed
Over the scattered leaves that every day lays dead.

III.

But who are these who pass so late
Beneath Amboise's echoing gate,
And seek the sweet path, poplar-shaded,
By breeze and moonbeam uninvaded?

They are two forms that move like one,
Each to the music of the other's lips,
The cold night thrilling with the tone
Of their low words,—the grey eclipse,
Cast from the tangled boughs above,
Their dark eyes penetrate with love;
Two forms,—one crested, calm, and proud,
Yet with bowed head and gentle ear inclining
To her who moves as in a sable cloud
Of her own waving hair—the star-flowers shining
Through its soft waves, like planets when they keep
Reflected watch beneath the sunless deep.

IV.

Her brow is pure and pale, her eyes
Deep as the unfathomed sky;
Her lips, from which the sweet words rise
Like flames from incensed sacrifice,
Quiver with untold thoughts, that lie
Burning beneath their crimson glow,
As mute and deathless lightnings sleep
At sunset, where the dyes are deep
On Rosa's purple snow;
She moves all beautiful and bright,
With little in that form of light
To set the seal of mortal birth,
Or own her earthy—of the earth,
Unless it be one strange, quick trace
That checks the glory of her face,—

A wayward meaning, dimly shed,
A shadow, scarcely felt ere fled;
A spot upon the brow, a spark
Under those eyes subdued and dark;
A low, short discord in the tone
Of music round her being thrown;
A mystery, more conceived than seen;
A wildness of the word and mien;
The sign of wilder work within,
Which may be sorrow—must be sin.

V.

Slowly they moved, that knight and dame,
Where hanging thickets quench and tame
The river's flash and cry;
Mellowed among the leafage came
Its thunder-voice—its flakes of flame
Drifted undisturbing by,
Sunk to a twilight and a sigh.
Their path was o'er the entangled rest
Of dark night-flowers that underneath
Their feet, as their dim bells were pressed,
Sent up warm pulses of soft breath.
Ranged in sepulchral ranks above,
Grey spires of shadowy cypress clove,
With many a shaft of sacred gloom,
The evening heavens' mysterious dome;
Slowly above their columns keen
Rolled on its path that starred serene;

A thousand fountains soundless flow,
With imaged azure, moved below;
And through the grove, and o'er the tide,
Pale forms appeared to watch, to glide,
O'er whose faint limbs the evening sky
Had cast like life its crimson dye;
Was it not life—so bright—so weak—
That flushed the bloodless brow and cheek,
And bade the lips of wreathèd stone
Kindle to all but breath and tone?
It moved—it heaved—that stainless breast!
Ah! what can break such marble rest?
It was a shade that passed—a shade
It was not bird nor bough that made,
Nor dancing leaf, nor falling fruit;
For where it moves—that shadow, grey and chill,—
The birds are lulled—the leaves are mute—
The air is cold and still.

VI.

Slowly they moved, that dame and knight,
As one by one the stars grew bright;
Fondly they moved—they did not mark
They had a follower strange and dark.
Just where the leaves their feet disturbed
Sunk from their whispering tune,
(It seemed beneath a fear that curbed
Their motion very soon,)

A shadow fell upon them, cast
By a less visible form that passed
Between them and the moon.
Was it a fountain's falling shiver?
It moveth on—it will not stay—
Was it a mist-wreath of the river?
The mist hath melted all away,
And the risen moon is full and clear,
And the moving shadow is marked and near.
See! where the dead leaves felt it pass,
There are footsteps left on the bended grass—
Footsteps as of an armed heel,
Heavy with links of burning steel.

VII.

Fondly they moved, that dame and knight,
By the gliding river's billow light;
Their lips were mute, their hands were given,
Their hearts did hardly stir;
The maid had raised her eyes to heaven,
But his were fallen on her.
They did not heed, they did not fear
That follower strange that trod so near,
An armed form whose cloudy mail
Flashed as it moved with radiance pale;
So gleams the moonlit torrent through
Its glacier's deep, transparent blue;
Quivering and keen, its steps of pride
Shook the sheathed lightning at his side,

And waved its dark and drifted plume,
Like fires that haunt the unholy tomb,
Where, cursed with crime, the mouldering dead
Lie restless in their robes of lead.
What eye shall seek, what soul can trace
The deep death-horror of its face?—
The trackless livid smile that played
Beneath the casque's concealing shade,
The angered eye's unfathomed glare,
(So sleep the fountains of despair
Beneath the soul whose sins unseal
The wells of all it fears to feel.)
The sunk, unseen, all-seeing gloom,
Scarred with the ravage of the tomb,
The passions that made life their prey,
Fixed on the feature's last decay,
The pangs that made the human heart their slave,
Frozen on the changeless aspect of the grave.

VIII.

And still it followed where they went,
That unregarding pair;
It kept on them its eyes intent,
And from their glance the sickened air
Shrank, as if tortured. Slow—how slow
The knight and lady trod!
You had heard their hearts beat just as loud
As their footsteps on the sod.

They paused at length in a leafless place
Where the moonlight shone on the maiden's face;
Still as an image of stone she stood,
Though the heave of her breath and the beat of her blood
Murmured and mantled to and fro,
Like the billows that heave on a hill of snow,
When the midnight winds are short and low.
The words of her lover came burning and deep,
And his hand was raised to the holy sky:
Can the lamps of the universe bear or keep
False witness or record on high?
He starts to his feet from the spot where he knelt,—
What voice hath he heard, what fear hath he felt?
His lips in their silence are bloodless and dry,
And the love-light fails from his glazèd eye.

IX.

Well might he quail, for full displayed
Before him rose that dreadful shade,
And o'er his mute and trembling trance
Waved its pale crest and quivering lance;
And traced, with pangs of sudden pain,
The form of words upon his brain:
"Thy vows are deep; but still thou bear'st the chain,
Cast on thee by a deeper—vowed in vain;
Thy love is fair; but fairer forms are laid,
Cold and forgotten, in the cypress shade;
Thy arm is strong; but arms of stronger trust,
Repose unnerved, undreaded, in the dust;

Around thy lance shall bend the living brave,
Then, arm thee for the challenge of the grave."

X.

The sound had ceased, the shape had passed away,
Silent the air, and pure the planet's ray.
They stood beneath the lonely breathing night,
The lovely lady and the lofty knight;
He moved in shuddering silence by her side,
Or wild and wandering to her words replied,
Shunning her anxious eyes, on his that bent:
"Thou didst not see it,—'twas to me 'twas sent.
To me,—but why to me?—I knew it not,—
It was no dream,—it stood upon the spot,
Where"—Then, with lighter tone and bitter smile,
"Nothing, beloved,—a pang that did beguile
My spirit of its strength,—a dream,—a thought,—
A fancy of the night." And though she sought
More reason of his dread, he heard her not,
For, mingling with those words of phantom fear,
There was another echo in his ear,—
An under-murmur deep and clear,
The faint low sob of one in pain:
"May the faith thou hast forgotten
Bind thee with its broken chain."

PART FOURTH.

I.

'Tis morn!—in clustered rays increased—
Exulting rays, that deeply drink
The starlight of the east,
And strew with crocus dyes the brink
Of those blue streams that pause and sink
Far underneath their heavenly strand—
Soft capes of vapour, ribbed like sand.
Along the Loire white sails are flashing,
Through stars of spray their dark oars dashing;
The rocks are reddening one by one,
The purple sandbanks flushed with sun,
And crowned with fire on crags and keep.
Amboise! above thy lifted steep,
Far lightening o'er the subject vale,
Blaze thy broad range of ramparts pale!
Through distance azure as the sky,
That vale sends up its morning cry,
From countless leaves, that shaking shade
Its tangled paths of pillared glade,
And ceaseless fan, with quivering cool,
Each gentle stream and slumbrous pool,

That catch the leaf-song as they flow,
In tinkling echo pure and low,
Clear, deep, and moving, as the night,
And starred with orbs of lily light.
Nor are they leaves alone that sing,
  Nor waves alone that flow;
The leaves are lifted on the wing
  Of voices from below:
The waters keep, with shade subdued,
The image of a multitude—
  A merry crowd promiscuous met,
Of every age and heart united—
  Grey hairs with golden twined, and yet
With equal mien and eyes delighted;
With thoughts that mix, and hands that lock,
Behold they tread, with hurrying feet,
Along the thousand paths that meet
  Beneath Amboise's rock;
For there, upon the meadows wide,
That couch along the river-side,
  Are pitched a snowy flock
Of warrior tents, like clouds that rest,
Through champaigns of the quiet west,
When, far in distance, stretched serene,
The evening sky lies calm and green.
Amboise's lord must bear to-day
His love-gage through the rival fray;
Through all the coasts of fiery France
  His challenge shook the air,

That none could break so true a lance,
Nor for a dame so fair.

II.

The lists are circled round with shields,
Like lily-leaves that lie
On forest pools in clustered fields
Of countless company.
But every buckler's bosses black
Dash the full beams of morning back,
In orbèd wave of welded lines,
With mingled blaze of crimson signs,
And light of lineage high:
As sounds that gush when thoughts are strong,
But words are weak with tears,
Awoke, above the warrior throng,
The wind among the spears;
Afar in hollow surge they shook,
As reeds along some summer brook
Glancing beneath the July moon,
All bowed and touched in pleasant tune;
Their steely lightning passed and played
Alternate with the cloudy shade
Of crested casques, and flying flakes
Of horse-manes, twined like sable snakes,
And misty plumes in darkness drifted,
And chargèd banners broadly lifted,
Purpling the air with storm-tints cast
Down through their undulation vast,

Wide the billowy army strewing,
Like to flags of victory
From some wrecked armada's ruin,
Left to robe the sea.

III.

As the morning star new risen
In a circle of calm sky,
Where the white clouds stand to listen
For the spherèd melody
Of her planetary path,
And her soft rays pierce the wrath
Of the night-storms stretched below,
Till they sink like wreaths of snow,
(Lighting heaven with their decay)
Into sudden silentness—
Throned above the stormy stress
Of that knightly host's array,
Goddess-formed, as one whom mortals
Need but gaze on to obey,
Distant seen, as through the portals
Of some temple grey;
The glory of a marble dream,
Kindling the eyes that gaze, the lips that pray—
One gentle lady sat, retiring but supreme.

IV.

Upon her brow there was no crown,
Upon her robe no gem;

Yet few were there who would not own
Her queen of earth, and them,
Because that brow was crowned with light
As with a diadem,
And her quick thoughts, as they did rise
Were in the deep change of her eyes
Traced one by one, as stars that start
Out of the orbèd peace of night,
Still drooping as they dart;
And her sweet limbs shone heavenly bright,
Following, with undulation white,
The heaving of her heart.
High she sat, and all apart,
Meek of mien, with eyes declined,
Less like one of mortal mind,
Than some changeless spirit shrined
In the memories of men,
Whom the passions of its kind
Cannot hurt nor move again.

V.

High she sat, in meekness shaming
All of best and brightest there,
Till the herald's voice, proclaiming
Her the fairest of the fair,
Rang along the morning air;
And then she started, and that shade,
Which in the moonlit garden glade

Had marked her with its mortal stain,
Did pass upon her face again;
And in her eye a sudden flash
Came and was gone; but it were rash
To say if it were pride or pain;
And on her lips a smile, scarce worn,
Less, as it seemed, of joy than scorn,
Was with a strange, quick quivering mixed,
Which passed away, and left them fixed
In calm, persisting, colourless,
Perchance too perfect to be peace.
A moment more, and still serene
Returned, yet changed—her mood and mien;
What eye that traceless change could tell,
Slight, transient,—but unspeakable?
She sat, divine of soul and brow;
It passed,—and all is human now.

VI.

The multitude, with loud acclaim,
Caught up the lovely lady's name;
Thrice round the lists arose the cry;
But when it sank, and all the sky
Grew doubly silent by its loss,
A slow, strange murmur came across
The waves of the reposing air,—
A deep, soft voice, that everywhere
Arose at once, so lowly clear,
That each seemed in himself to hear

Alone; and, fixed with sweet surprise,
Did ask around him, with his eyes,
If 'twere not some dream-music dim
And false, that only rose for him.

VII.

"Oh, lady Queen!—Oh, lady Queen!
Fairest of all who tread
The soft earth's carpet green,
Or breathe the blessings shed
By the stars and tempest free;
Know thou, oh, lady Queen,
Earth hath borne, sun hath seen,
Fairer than thee.

"The flush of beauty burneth
In the palaces of earth,
But thy lifted spirit scorneth
All match of mortal birth:
And the nymph of the hill,
And the naïad of the sea,
Were of beauty quenched and chill,
Beside thee!

"Where the grey cypress shadows
Move onward with the moon
Round the low mounded meadows,
And the gravestones, whitely hewn,

Gleam like camp-fires through the night,
There,—in silence of long swoon,
In the horror of decay;
With the worm for their delight,
And the shroud for their array;
With the garland on their brow,
And the black cross by their side;
With the darkness for their beauty,
And the dust for their pride;
With the smile of baffled pain
On the cold lips half-apart;
With the dimness on the brain,
And the peace upon the heart;
Ever sunk in solemn shade,
Underneath the cypress tree,
Lady Queen, there are laid
Fairer than thee!"

VIII.

It passed away, that melodie,
But none the minstrel there could see;
The lady sat still calm of thought,
Save that there rose a narrow spot
Of crimson on her cheek;
But then, the words were far and weak,—
Perchance she heard them not.
The crowd, still listening, feared to speak,
And only mixed in sympathy
Of pressing hand and wondering eye,

And left the lists all hushed and mute,
For every wind of heaven had sunk
To that aërial lute.
The ponderous banners, closed and shrunk,
Down from their listless lances hung,
The windless plumes were feebly flung;
With lifted foot, the listening steed
Did scarcely fret the fern;
And the challenger on his charmèd steed
Sat statue-like and stern;
Till, mixed with martial trumpet-strain,
The herald's voice arose again,
Proclaiming that Amboise's lord
Dared, by the trial of the sword,
The bravest knights of France to prove
Their fairer dame or truer love:—
And, ere the brazen blast had died,
That strange, sweet singing voice replied,
So wild, that every heart did keep
Its pulse to time the cadence deep:—

IX.

"Where the purple swords are swiftest,
And the rage of death unreined,
Lord of battle, though thou liftest
Crest unstooped, and shield unstained,
—Vain before thy footsteps fail
Useless spear and rended mail;

—Shuddering from thy glance and blow,
Earth's best armies sink like snow;
Know thou this: unmatched, unmet,
Night hath children mightier yet.

"The chapel vaults are deadly damp,
Their air is breathless all;
The downy bats they clasp and cramp
Their cold wings to the wall;
The bright-eyed eft, from cranny and cleft,
Doth noiselessly pursue
The twining light of the death-worms white,
In the pools of the earth-dew;
The downy bat,—the death-worm white,—
And the eft with its sable coil—
They are company good for a sworded knight,
In his rest from the battle-toil;
The sworded knight is sunk in rest,
With the cross-hilt in his hand?
But his arms are folded o'er his breast
As weak as ropes of sand.
His eyes are dark, his sword of wrath
Is impotent and dim;
Dark lord! in this thy victor path,
Remember him."

X.

The sounds sunk deeply,—and were gone;
And, for a time, the quiet crowd

Hung on the long departing tone,
Of wailing in the morning cloud,
In spirit wondering and beguiled;
Then turned, with steadfast gaze, to learn
What recked he, of such warning wild—
Amboise's champion stern.
But little to their sight betrayed
The visor bars and plumage shade;
The nearest thought he smiled—
Yet more in bitterness than mirth,—
And held his eyes upon the earth
With thoughtful gaze, half sad, half keen,
As they would seek, beneath the screen
Of living turf and golden bloom,
The secrets of its under-tomb.

XI.

A moment more, with burning look,
High in the air his plume he shook,
And waved his lance as in disdain,
And struck his charger with the rein,
And loosed the sword-hilt to his grasp,
And closed the visor's grisly clasp,
And all expectant sate and still;
The herald blew his summons shrill:
Keen answer rose from list and tent,
For France had there her bravest sent.
With hearts of steel, and eyes of flame,
Full armed the knightly concourse came;

They came like storms of heaven set free,
They came like surges of the sea,
  Resistless, dark and dense:
Like surges on a sable rock,
They fell with their own fiery shock,
  Dashed into impotence.
O'er each encounter's rush and gloom,
Like meteor rose Amboise's plume;
As stubble to his calm career
Crashed from his breast the splintered spear;
Before his charge the war-horse reeled,
And bowed the helm, and sank the shield,
And checked the heart, and failed the arm;
And still the herald's loud alarm
  Disturbed the short delay—
"On, chevaliers! for fame, for love,—
For these dark eyes that burn above
  The field of your affray!"

XII.

Six knights had fallen, the last in death,—
Deeply the challenger drew his breath.
The field was hushed,—the wind that rocked
  His standard staff grew light and low.
A seventh came not. He unlocked
  His visor-clasp, and raised his brow
To catch its coolness. Marvel not
If it were pale with weariness,

For fast that day his hand had wrought
Its warrior-work of victory;
Yet, one who loved him might have thought
There was a trouble in his eye,
And that it turned in some distress
Unto the quiet sky.
Indeed, that sky was strangely still,
And through the air unwonted chill
Hung on the heat of noon;
Men spoke in whispers, and their words
Came brokenly, as if the chords
Of their hearts were out of tune;
And deeper still, and yet more deep
The coldness of that heavy sleep
Came on the lulled air. And men saw,
In every glance, an answering awe
Meeting their own with doubtful change
Of expectation wild and strange.
Dread marvel was it thus to feel
The echoing earth, the trumpet-peal,
The thundering hoof, the crashing steel,
Cease to a pause so dead;
They heard the aspens' moaning shiver,
And the low tinkling of the river
Upon its pebble bed.
The challenger's trump rang long and loud,
And the light upon his standard proud
Grew indistinct and dun;
The challenger's trump rang long and loud,

And the shadow of a narrow cloud
Came suddenly o'er the sun:

XIII.

A narrow cloud of outline quaint,
Much like a human hand;
And after it, with following faint,
Came up a dull, grey, lengthening band
Of small cloud-billows, like sea-sand,
And then, out of the gaps of blue,
Left moveless in the sky, there grew
Long snaky knots of sable mist,
Which counter-winds did vex and twist,
Knitted and loosed, and tossed and tore,
Like passive weeds on that sandy shore;
And these seemed with their touch to infect
The sweet, white upper clouds, and checked
Their pacing on the heavenly floor,
And quenched the light which was to them
As blood and life, singing the while
A fitful requiem;
Until the hues of each cloud-isle
Sank into one vast veil of dread,
Coping the heaven as if with lead,
With dragged, pale edges here and there,
Through which the noon's transparent glare
Fell with a dusky red.
And all the summer voices sank
To let that darkness pass;

The weeds were quiet on the bank,
The cricket in the grass;
The merry birds, the buzzing flies,
The leaves of many lips,
Did make their songs a sacrifice
Unto the noon-eclipse.

XIV.

The challenger s trump rang long and loud—
Hark, as its notes decay!
Was it out of the earth—or up in the cloud?—
Or an echo far away?
Soft it came, and none knew whence—
Deep, melodious, and intense,
So lightly breathed, so wildly blown,
Distant it seemed—yet everywhere
Possessing all the infinite air—
One quivering trumpet-tone!
With slow increase of gathering sway,
Louder along the wind it lay;
It shook the woods, it pressed the wave,
The guarding rocks through chasm and cave
Roared in their fierce reply.
It rose, and o'er the lists at length
Crashed into full tempestuous strength,
Shook through its storm-tried turrets high
Amboise's mountain home,
And the broad thunder-vaulted sky
Clanged like a brazen dome.

XV.

Unchanged, unchilled in heart and eye,
The challenger heard that dread reply;
His head was bowed upon his breast,
And on the darkness in the west
His glance dwelt patiently;
Out of that western gloom there came
A small white vapour, shaped like flame,
Unscattering, and on constant wing
Rode lonely, like a living thing,
Upon its stormy path; it grew,
And gathered as it onward drew—
It paused above the lists, a roof
Inwoven with a lightning woof
Of undulating fire, whose trace,
Like corpse-fire on a human face,
Was mixed of light and death; it sank
Slowly; the wild war-horses shrank
  Tame from the nearing flash; their eyes
Glared the blue terror back; it shone
On the broad spears, like wavering wan
  Of unaccepted sacrifice.
Down to the earth the smoke-cloud rolled—
Pale-shadowed through its sulphurous fold,
Banner and armour, spear and plume
Gleamed like a vision of the tomb.
One form alone was all of gloom—
In deep and dusky arms arrayed,

Changeless alike through flash and shade,
Sudden within the barrier gate
Behold, the seventh champion sate!
He waved his hand—he stooped his lance—
The challenger started from his trance;
He plunged his spur—he loosed his rein—
A flash—a groan—a woman's cry—
And up to the receiving sky
The white cloud rose again!

XVI.

The white cloud rose—the white cloud fled—
The peace of heaven returned in dew,
And soft and far the noontide shed
Its holiness of blue.
The rock, the earth, the wave, the brake
Rejoiced beneath that sweet succeeding;
No sun nor sound can warm or wake
One human heart's unheeding.
Stretched on the dark earth's bosom, chill,
Amboise's lord lay stark and still.
The heralds raise him but to mark
The last light leave his eyeballs dark—
The last blood dwindle on his cheek—
They turned; a murmur wild and weak
Passed on the air, in passion broken,
The faint low sob of one in pain—
"Lo! the faith thou hast forgotten
Binds thee with its broken chain!"

PART FIFTH.

I.

The mists, that mark the day's decline,
Have cooled and lulled the purple air;
The bell, from Saint Cecilia's shrine,
Hath tolled the evening hour of prayer;
With folded veil, and eyes that shed
Faint rays along the stones they tread,
And bosom stooped, and step subdued,
Came forth that ancient sisterhood;
Each bearing on her lips along
Part of the surge of a low song,—
A wailing requiem, wildly mixed
With suppliant cry, how weak to win,
From home so far—from fate so fixed,
A spirit dead in sin!
Yet yearly must they meet, and pray
For her who died—how long ago!
How long—'twere only Love could know;
And she, ere her departing day,
Had watched the last of Love's decay;
Had felt upon her fading cheek
None but a stranger's sighs;

Had none but stranger souls to seek
Her death-thoughts in her eyes;
Had none to guard her couch of clay,
Or trim her funeral stone,
Save those who, when she passed away,
Felt not the more alone.

II.

And years had seen that narrow spot
Of death-sod levelled and forgot,
Ere question came of record kept,
Or how she died—or where she slept.
The night was wild, the moon was late—
A lady sought the convent gate;
The midnight chill was on her breast,
The dew was on her hair,
And in her eye there was unrest,
And on her brow, despair.
She came to seek the face, she said,
Of one deep injured. One by one
The gentle sisters came, and shed
The meekness of their looks upon
Her troubled watch. "I know them not,
I know them not," she murmured still:
"Are then her face—her form forgot?"
Alas! we lose not when we will
The thoughts of an accomplished ill;
The image of our love may fade,
But what can quench a victim's shade?

III.

"She comes not yet. She will not come.
I seek her chamber;" and she rose
With a quick start of grief, which some
Would have restrained; but the repose
Of her pale brow rebuked them. "Back,"
She cried, "the path,—the place, I know,—
Follow me not—though broad and black
The night lies on that lonely track,
There moves for ever by my side
A darker spirit for my guide;
A broader curse—a wilder woe,
Must gird my footsteps as I go."

IV.

Sternly she spoke, and shuddering, sought
The cloister arches, marble-wrought,
That send, through many a trembling shaft,
The deep wind's full, melodious draught,
Round the low space of billowy turf,
Where funeral roses flash like surf,
O'er those who share the convent grave,
Laid each beneath her own green wave.

V.

From stone to stone she past, and spelt
The letters with her fingers felt;

The stains of time are drooped across
Those mouldering names, obscure with moss;
The hearts where once they deeply dwelt,
With music's power to move and melt,
Are stampless too—the fondest few
Have scarcely kept a trace more true.

VI.

She paused at length beside a girth
Of osiers overgrown and old;
And with her eyes fixed on the earth,
Spoke slowly and from lips as cold
As ever met the burial mould.

VII.

"I have not come to ask for peace
From thee, thou unforgiving clay!
The pangs that pass—the throbs that cease
From such as thou, in their decay,
Bequeath them that repose of wrath
So dark of heart, so dull of ear,
That bloodless strength of sworded sloth,
That shows not mercy, knows not fear,
And keeps its death-smile of disdain
Alike for pity, as for pain.
But, galled by many a ghastly link,
That bound and brought my soul to thee,
I come to bid thy vengeance drink
The wine of this my misery.

Look on me as perchance the dead
Can look, through soul and spirit spread
Before thee; go thou forth, and tread
The lone fields of my life, and see
  Those dark, large flocks of restless pangs
They pasture, and the thoughts of thee
  That shepherd them, and teach their fangs
To eat the green, and guide their feet
To trample where the banks are sweet,
And judge betwixt us, which is best,
My sleepless torture, or thy rest;
And which the worthier to be wept,
The fate I caused, or that I kept.
I tell thee, that my steps must stain
With more than blood, their path of pain;
And I would fold my weary feet
More gladly in thy winding sheet,
And wrap my bosom in thy shroud,
And dash thy darkness on the crowd
  Of terrors in my sight, and sheathe
Mine ears from their confusion loud,
  And cool my brain with cypress wreath
More gladly from its pulse of blood,
Than ever bride with orange bud
Clouded her moony brow. Alas!
This osier fence I must not pass.
Wilt thou not thank me, that I dare
  To feel the beams and drink the breath
That curse me out of Heaven, nor share

The cup that quenches human care,
The Sacrament of death;
But yield thee this, thy living prey
Of erring soul and tortured clay,
To feed thee, when thou com'st to keep
Thy watch of wrath around my sleep,
Or turn the shafts of daylight dim,
With faded breast and frozen limb?

VIII.

"Yet come, and be, as thou hast been,
Companion ceaseless—not unseen,
Though gloomed the veil of flesh between
Mine eyes and thine, and fast and rife
Around me flashed the forms of life:
I knew them by their change—for one
I did not lose, I could not shun,
Through laughing crowd, and lighted room,
Through listed field, and battle's gloom,
Through all the shapes and sounds that press
The Path or wake the Wilderness:
E'en when He came, mine eyes to fill,
Whom Love saw solitary still,
For ever, shadowy by my side,
I heard thee murmur, watched thee glide;
But what shall now thy purpose bar?
The laughing crowd is scattered far,
The lighted hall is left forlorn,
The listed field is white with corn,

And he, beneath whose voice and brow
I could forget thee, is—as thou."

IX.

She spoke, she rose, and, from that hour,
The peasant groups that pause beside
The chapel walls at eventide,
To catch the notes of chord and song
That unseen fingers form, and lips prolong,
Have heard a voice of deeper power,
Of wilder swell, and purer fall,
More sad, more modulate, than all.
It is not keen, it is not loud,
But ever heard alone,
As winds that touch on chords of cloud
Across the heavenly zone,
Then chiefly heard, when drooped and drowned
In strength of sorrow, more than sound;
That low articulated rush
Of swift, but secret passion, breaking
From sob to song, from gasp to gush;
Then failing to that deadly hush,
That only knows the wilder waking—
That deep, prolonged, and dream-like swell,
So full that rose—so faint that fell,
So sad—so tremulously clear—
So checked with something worse than fear.
Whose can they be?
Go, ask the midnight stars, that see

The secrets of her sleepless cell;
For none but God and they can tell
What thoughts and deeds of darkened choice
Gave horror to that burning voice—
That voice, unheard save thus, untaught
The words of penitence or prayer;
The grey confessor knows it not;
The chapel echoes only bear
Its burst and burthen of despair;
And pity's voice hath rude reply
From darkened brow and downcast eye,
That quench the question, kind or rash,
With rapid shade and reddening flash;
Or, worse, with the regardless trance
Of sealèd ear, and sightless glance,—
That fearful glance, so large and bright,
That dwells so long, with heed so light,
When, far within, its fancy lies,
Nor movement marks, nor ray replies,
Nor kindling dawn, nor holy dew
Reward the words that soothe or sue.

X.

Restless she moves; beneath her veil
That writhing brow is sunk and shaded;
Its touch is cold—its veins are pale—
Its crown is lost—its lustre faded;
Yet lofty still, though scarcely bright,
Its glory burns beneath the blight

Of wasting thought, and withering crime,
And curse of torture and of time;
Of pangs—of pride, endured—degraded—
Of guilt unchecked, and grief unaided.
Her sable hair is slightly braided;
Warm, like south wind, its foldings float
Round her soft hands and marble throat;
How passive these, how pulseless this,
That love should lift, and life should warm!
Ah! where the kindness, or the kiss,
Can break their dead and drooping charm!
Perchance they were not always so:
That breast hath sometimes movement deep,
Timed like the sea, that surges slow
Where storms have trodden long ago;
And sometimes, from their listless sleep,
Those hands are harshly writhed and knit,
As grasping what their frenzied fit
Deemed peace to crush, or death to quit.
And then the sisters shrink aside;
They know the words that others hear
Of grace, or gloom—to charm, or chide,—
Fall on her inattentive ear
As falls the snowflake on the rock,
That feels no chill, and knows no shock
Nor dare they mingle in her mood,
So dark, and dimly understood;
And better so, if, as they say,
'Tis something worse than solitude:

For some have marked, when that dismay
Had seemed to snatch her soul away,
That in her eye's unquietness
There shone more terror than distress!
And deemed they heard, when, soft and dead,
By night they watched her sleepless tread,
Strange words addressed, beneath her breath,
As if to one who heard in death,
And, in the night-wind's sound and sigh,
Imagined accents of reply.

. . . . . .

XI.

The sun is on his western march,
His rays are red on shaft and arch;
With hues of hope their softness dyes
The image with the lifted eyes,*
Where listening still, with trancèd smile,
Cecilia lights the glimmering aisle;
So calm the beams that flushed her rest
Of ardent brow, and virgin breast,
Whose chill they pierced, but not profaned,
And seemed to stir what scarce they stained,
So warm the life, so pure the ray:
Such she had stood, ere snatched from clay,

* I was thinking of the St. Cecilia of Raphael at Bologna, turned into marble—were it possible, where so much depends on the entranced darkness of the eyes. The shrine of St. Cecilia is altogether imaginary; she is not a favourite saint in matters of dedication. I don t know why.

When sank the tones of sun and sphere,
Deep melting on her mortal ear;
And angels stooped, with fond control,
To write the rapture on her soul.

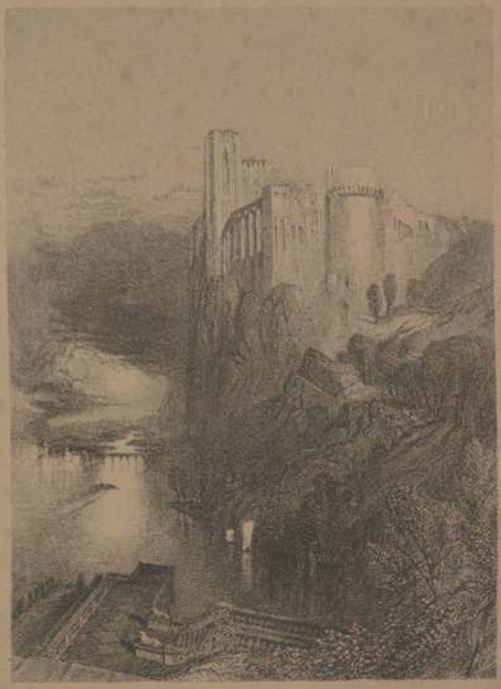
XII.

Two sisters, at the statue's feet,
Paused in the altar's arched retreat,
As risen but now from earnest prayer—
One aged and grey—one passing fair;
In changeful gush of breath and blood,
Mute for a time the younger stood;
Then raised her head and spoke: the flow
Of sound was measured, stern, and slow:—

XIII.

"Mother! thou sayest she died in strife
Of heavenly wrath and human woe;
For me, there is not that in life
Whose loss could ask, or love could owe,
As much of pang as now I show;
But that the book which angels write
Within men's spirits day by day,
That diary of judgment-light,
That cannot pass away,
Which, with cold ear and glazing eye,
Men hear and read before they die,
Is open now before me set;
Its drifting leaves are red and wet

With blood and fire, and yet, methought,
Its words were music, were they not
Written in darkness.
I confess!
Say'st thou? The sea shall yield its dead,
Perchance my spirit its distress;
Yet there are paths of human dread
That none but God should trace or tread;
Men judge by a degraded law;
With Him, I fear not: He who gave
The sceptre to the passion, saw
The sorrow of the slave.
He made me, not as others are,
Who dwell, like willows by a brook,
That see the shadow of one star
For ever with serenest look
Lighting their leaves,—that only hear
Their sun-stirred boughs sing soft and clear,
And only live by consciousness
Of waves that feed and winds that bless.
Me—rooted on a lonely rock,
Amidst the rush of mountain rivers,
He doomed to bear the sound and shock
Of shafts that rend and storms that rock,
The frost that blasts, and flash that shivers;
And I am desolate and sunk,
A lifeless wreck—a leafless trunk,
Smitten with plagues, and seared with sin,
And black with rottenness within,



AMBOISE.
1841.

But conscious of the holier will
That saved me long, and strengthens still.

XIV.

"Mine eyes are dim, they scarce can trace
The rays that pierce this lonely place;
But deep within their darkness dwell
A thousand thoughts they knew—too well.
Those orbèd towers obscure and vast,*
That light the Loire with sunset last;
Those fretted groups of shaft and spire
That crest Amboise's cliff with fire,
When, far beneath, in moonlight fail
The winds that shook the pausing sail;
The panes that tint with dyes divine
The altar of St. Hubert's shrine;
The very stone on which I knelt,
When youth was pure upon my brow,
Though word I prayed, or wish I felt
I scarce remember now.
Methought that there I bowed to bless
A warrior's sword—a wanderer's way:

* The circular tower, seen to the right, in the engraving of Amboise, is so large as to admit of a spiral ascent in its interior, which two horsemen may ride up abreast. The chapel, which crowns the precipice, though small, is one of the loveliest bits of rich detail in France. In reality it is terminated by a small wooden spire, which I have not represented, as it destroyed the grandeur of the outline. It is dedicated to St. Hubert, a grotesque piece of carving above the entrance representing his *rencontre* with the sacred stag.

Ah! nearer now, the knee would press
The heart for which the lips would pray.
The thoughts were meek, the words were low—
I deemed them free from sinful stain;
It might be so. I only know
These were unheard, and those were vain.

XV.

"That stone is raised;—where once it lay
Is built a tomb of marble grey:*
Asleep within the sculptured veil
Seems laid a knight in linkèd mail;
Obscurely laid in powerless rest,
The latest of his line;
Upon his casque he bears no crest,
Upon his shield no sign.
I've seen the day when through the blue
Of broadest heaven his banner flew,
And armies watched, through farthest fight
The stainless symbol's stormy light
Wave like an angel's wing.
Ah! now a scorned and scathèd thing,
Its silken folds the worm shall fret,
The clay shall soil, the dew shall wet,
Where sleeps the sword that once could save,

* There is no such tomb *now* in existence, the chapel being circular, and unbroken in design; in fact, I have my doubts whether there ever was anything of the kind, the lady being slightly too vague in her assertions to deserve unqualified credit.

And droops the arm that bore;
Its hues must gird a nameless grave;
Nor wind shall wake, nor lance shall wave,
Nor glory gild it more:
For he is fallen—oh! ask not how,
Or ask the angels that unlock
The inmost grave's sepulchral rock;
I could have told thee once, but now
'Tis madness in me all, and thou
Wouldst deem it so, if I should speak.
And I am glad my brain is weak;—
Ah! this is yet its only wrong,
To know too well—to feel too long.

XVI.

"But I remember how he lay
When the rushing crowd were all away:
And how I called, with that low cry
He never heard without reply;
And how there came no sound nor sign,—
And the feel of his dead lips on mine;
And when they came to comfort me,
I laughed, because they could not see
The stain of blood, or print of lance,
To write the tomb upon the trance.
I saw, what they had heeded not,
Above his heart a small black spot;
Ah, woe! I knew how deep within
That stamp of death, that seal of sin,

Had struck with mortal agony
The heart so false—to all but me.

XVII.

"Mother! methinks my soul can say
It loved as well as woman's may;
And what I *would have given*, to gain
The answering love, to count were vain;
I know not,—what I *gave* I know—
My hope on high, my all below.
But hope and height of earth and heaven,
Or highest sphere to angels given,
Would I surrender, and take up
The horror of this cross and cup
I bear and drink, to win the thought
That I had failed in what I sought;
Alas! I won—rejoiced to win
The love whose every look was sin;
Whose every dimly worded breath
Was but the distant bell of death
For her who heard, for him who spoke.
Ah! though those hours were swift and few,
The guilt they bore, the vow they broke,
Time cannot punish—nor renew.

XVIII.

"They told me, long ago, that thou
Hadst seen, beneath this very shade

Of mouldering stone that wraps us now,
The death of her whom he betrayed.
Thine eyes are wet with memory,—
In truth 'tis fearful sight to see
E'en the last sands of sorrow run,
Though the fierce work of death be done,
And the worst woe that fate can will
Bids but its victim to be still.
But I beheld the darker years
That first oppressed her beauty's bloom;
The sickening heart and silent tears
That asked and eyed her early tomb;
I watched the deepening of her doom,
As, pulse by pulse, and day by day,
The crimson life-tint waned away;
And timed her bosom's quickening beat,
That hastened only to be mute,
And the short tones, each day more sweet,
That made her lips like an Eolian lute,
When winds are saddest; and I saw
The kindling of the unearthly awe
That touched those lips with frozen light,
The smile, so bitter, yet so bright,
Which grief, that sculptured, seals its own,
Which looks like life, but stays like stone;
Which checks with fear the charm it gives,
And loveliest burns when least it lives,—
All this I saw. Thou canst not guess
How woman may be merciless.

One word from me had rent apart
The chains that chafed her dying heart:
Closer I clasped the links of care,
And learned to pity—not to spare.

XIX.

"She might have been avenged; for when
Her woe was aidless among men,
And tooth of scorn and brand of shame
Had seared her spirit, soiled her name,
There came a stranger to her side,
Or—if a friend, forgotten long,
For hearts are frail when hands divide.
There were who said her early pride
Had cast his love away with wrong;
But that might be a dreamer's song.
He looked like one whom power or pain
Had hardened, or had hewn, to rock
That could not melt nor rend again,
Unless the staff of God might shock,
And burst the sacred waves to birth
That deck with bloom the Desert's dearth—
That dearth that knows nor breeze nor balm,
Nor feet that print, nor sounds that thrill;
Though cloudless was his soul, and calm,
It was the Desert still;
And blest the wildest cloud had been
That broke the desolate serene,

And kind the storm, that farthest strewed
Those burning sands of solitude.

XX.

"Darkly he came, and in the dust
Had writ, perchance, Amboise's shame:
I knew the sword he drew was just,
And in my fear a fiend there came;
It deepened first, and then derided
The madness of my youth;
I deemed not that the God, who guided
The battle-blades in truth,
Could gather from the earth the guilt
Of holy blood in secret spilt.

XXI.

"I watched at night the feast flow high;
I kissed the cup he drank to die;
I heard, at morn, the trumpet-call
Leap cheer'ly round the guarded wall;
And laughed to think how long and clear
The blast must be, for him to hear.
He lies within the chambers deep,
Beneath Amboise's chapel floor,
Where slope the rocks in ridges steep,
Far to the river shore;
Where thick the summer flowers are sown,
And, even within the deadening stone,

A living ear can catch the close
Of gentle waves for ever sent,
To soothe, with lull and long lament,
That murdered knight's repose:
And yet he sleeps not well;—but I
Am wild, and know not what I say;—
My guilt thou knowest—the penalty
Which I have paid, and yet must pay,
Thou canst not measure. O'er the day
I see the shades of twilight float—
My time is short. Believest thou not?
I know my pulse is true and light,
My step is firm, mine eyes are bright;
Yet see they—what thou canst not see,—
The open grave, deep dug for me;
The vespers we shall sing to-night
My burial hymn shall be:
But what the path by which I go,
My heart desires, yet dreads, to know.
But this remember, (these the last
Of words I speak for earthly ear;
Nor sign nor sound my soul shall cast,
Wrapt in its final fear:)
For him, forgiving, brave and true,
Whom timeless and unshrived I slew,
For him be holiest masses said,
And rites that sanctify the dead,
With yearly honour paid.
For her, by whom he was betrayed,

Nor blood be shed,* nor prayer be made,—
The cup were death—the words were sin,
To judge the soul they could not win,
And fall in torture o'er the grave
Of one they could not wash, nor save."

. . . . . .

XXII.

The vesper beads are told and slipped,
The chant has sunk by choir and crypt.
That circle dark—they rise not yet;
With downcast eyes, and lashes wet,
They linger, bowed and low;
They must not part before they pray
For her who left them on this day
How many years ago!

XXIII.

They knelt within the marble screen,
Black-robed and moveless, hardly seen,
Save by their shades that sometimes shook
Along the quiet floor,
Like leaf-shades on a waveless brook
When the wind walks by the shore.
The altar lights that burned between,
Were seven small fire-shafts, white and keen,
Intense and motionless.

* In the sacrifice of the Mass the priest is said to offer Christ for the quick and dead.

They did not shake for breeze nor breath,
  They did not change, nor sink, nor shiver;
They burned as burn the barbs of death
  At rest within their angel's quiver.
From lip to lip, in chorus kept,
The sad, sepulchral music swept,
While *one* sweet voice unceasing led:
Were there but mercy for the dead,
Such prayer had power to soothe—to save—
Ay! even beneath the binding grave;
So pure the springs of faith that fill
  The spirit's fount, at last unsealed,
A corpse's ear, an angel's will,
  That voice might wake, or wield.
Keener it rose, and wilder yet;
The lifeless flowers that wreathe and fret
Column and arch with garlands white,
Drank the deep fall of its delight,
Like purple rain* at evening shed
  On Sestri's cedar-darkened shore,
When all her sunlit waves lie dead,
And, far along the mountains fled,
  Her clouds forget the gloom they wore,
Till winding vale and pasture low

* I never saw such a thing but once, on the mountains of Sestri, in the Gulf of Genoa. The whole western half of the sky was one intense amber colour, the air crystalline and cloudless, the other half grey with drifting showers. At the instant of sunset, the whole mass of *rain* turned of a deep rose-colour, the consequent rainbow being not varied with the seven colours, but one broad belt of paler rose; the other tints being so delicate as to be overwhelmed by the crimson of the rain.

Pant underneath their gush and glow;
So sank, so swept, on earth and air,
That single voice of passioned prayer.
The hollow tombs gave back the tone,
The roof's grey shafts of stalwart stone
Quivered like chords; the keen night-blast
Grew tame beneath the sound. 'Tis past:
That failing cry—how feebly flung!
What charm is laid on her who sung?
Slowly she rose—her eyes were fixed
On the void, penetrable air;
And in their glance was gladness mixed
With terror and an under-glare:
What human soul shall seize or share
The thoughts it might avow?
It might have been—ah! is it now—
Devotion?—or despair?

XXIV.

With steps whose short white flashes keep
Beneath the shade of her loose hair,
With measured pace, as one in sleep
Who heareth music in the air,
She left the sisters' circle deep.
Their anxious eyes of troubled thought
Dwelt on her, but she heeded not;
Fear-struck and breathless as they gazed,
Before her steps their ranks divided;
Her hand was given—her face was raised

As if to one who watched and guided.
Her form emerges from the shade:
Lo! she will cross, where full displayed
Against the altar light 'tis thrown;
She crosses now—but not alone.
Who leads her? Lo! the sisters shrink
Back from that guide with limbs that sink,
And eyes that glaze, and lips that blench;
For, seen where broad the beams were cast
By what it dimmed, but did not quench,
A dark, veiled form there passed—
Veiled with the nun's black robe, that shed
Faint shade around its soundless tread;
Moveless and mute the folds that fell,
Nor touch can change, nor breeze repel.
Deep to the earth its head was bowed,
Its face was bound with the white shroud;
One hand upon its bosom pressed—
One seemed to lead its mortal guest:
The hand it held lay bright and bare,
Cold as itself, and deadly fair.
What oath hath bound the fatal troth
Whose horror seems to seal them both?—
Each powerless in the grasp they give,
This to release, and that to live.

XXV.

Like sister sails, that drift by night
Together on the deep,

Seen only where they cross the light
That pathless waves must pathlike keep
From fisher's signal fire or pharos steep:

XXVI.

Like two thin wreaths that autumn dew
Hath framed of equal-paced cloud,
Whose shapes the hollow night can shroud,
Until they cross some caverned place
Of moon-illumined blue,
That live an instant, but must trace
Their onward way, to waste and wane
Within the sightless gloom again,
Where, scattered from their heavenly pride
Nor star nor storm shall gild or guide,—
So shape and shadow, side by side,
The consecrated light had crossed.
Beneath the aisle an instant lost,
Behold! again they glide
Where yonder moonlit arch is bent
Above the marble steps' descent,—
Those ancient steps, so steep and worn,
Though none descend, unless it be
Bearing, or borne, to sleep, or mourn,
The faithful, or the free.
The shade yon bending cypress cast,
Stirred by the weak and tremulous air,
Kept back the moonlight as they passed.
The rays returned: they were not there.

Who follows? Watching still to mark
If aught returned—(but all was dark)
Down to the gate, by two and three,
The sisters crept, how fearfully!
They only saw, when there they came,
Two wandering tongues of waving flame
O'er the white stones, confusedly strewed
Across the field of solitude.

1840.

AT THE AGE OF 21 YEARS.

To Adele.
The Tears of Psammenitus.
The Two Paths.
The Old Water-wheel.
The Departed Light.
Agonia.

TO ADELE.

I.

THAT slow and heavy bell hath knolled
  Like thunder o'er a shoreless sea;
I have not heard it since it told
  The hour that bore me back to thee:
The hour whose wings had lulled me long,
When hope was cold and grief was strong;
Whose kindness ever came, to keep
The shade of sorrow from my sleep,
And mocked my dreams, but, wild and far,
Departed with the morning star,—
Yet came at last. That lonely bell
Had waked me with its measured knell;
And though my soul, in its awaking
  From dreams of thee, is always chill,
I knew that hour, their brightness breaking,
  Had scattered only to fulfil.
And, through my trembling spirit sent,
The billowy echoes quivering went,
As the swift throb of morning breaks
Through the thin rain-cloud's folded flakes;

Even as, that hour, it beamed above
The azure of the expanded plains,
And filled the heaven with light, like love,
And kindled through its azure veins,
As the keen joy through mine:
I knew, that ere those purple stains
Of heaven should see the sun's decline,
And melt along the western sea,
A brighter sun should rise for me.

II.

And it hath risen,—and it hath set,
The glory and the tone
Of twilight have scarce passed, and yet
I have been long alone.
It is for those who can forget,
So that the path of time they tread
Is strewed with pangs and passions dead,
To trace their periods of weak pain
By the cold shadows, that reveal not
What once they felt—what now they feel not.
To those, with whom the linkèd chain
Of days and years can never press
Upon their unforgetfulness,
An hour may be as long,
When its keen thoughts are dark and swift,
And when its pangs are strong
As the onward, undistinguished drift

Of the calm years, that still retain
One hope, one passion, and one pain.

III.

That sun hath risen—that sun hath set,
And though the dim night is not yet
So lifeless or so dark, for me,
As it hath been—as it shall be,
There's that of dew and chillness thrown
  Across my thoughts and brow,
Whose inward meaning none have known,
  Not even thou—
Thou—for whose sake that brow is dark,
Whose constant pang thou canst not mark.
  Alas! if pity be a pain,
I would not wish thee once to see
How much the distant feel for thee,
  And feel in vain.

IV.

It strikes again, that measured chime;
Hark! its cold vibrations climb
Heavily up the slope of night;
And lo! how quiverings of keen light
Along the starlit waters follow
Those undulations hoarse and hollow,
That move among the tufted trees
  That crown yon eastern hill,

Which midnight frees from bird and breeze,
Bidding their leaves lie still.
There—deeply, softly, charmed and checked,
They pass the pile with slower swelling,
Where,* wildly wrung or early wrecked,
Pure heart and piercing intellect
Now keep their unattended dwelling:
And sorrow's sob and phrenzy's shriek
Are calm beneath their cadence weak;
And torture tamed and grief beguiled
Have turned, have listened, and have smiled.

V.

My own quick thoughts, which were as wild,
Have sunk at once, I know not why,—
Not less sad, but far more mild,
As these low sounds float by;
Low sounds, that seem the passing bell
For the swift and dark-eyed hours, whose rushing
Around the earth was fraught with flushing,
Kindled by the entrancing spell
That breathed of thee,
When from thy lips and from thy presence fell
The stream of light, of melody,
That on their wings did glow and dwell,
Till each was faint with his own ecstasy.
And they are dead,—cold and dead;
Yet in the light of their own beauty lying,

* A madhouse in a clump of trees.

That light, which is alone undimmed, undying,
When for all else the shroud is spread,—
Imperishable, though so pale,
It burns beneath the moveless veil,
That o'er their beauty and their breath
Hath cast a guise and charm of death:
A guise how false!—a charm how vain!
For each of the departing train
Drank, as it passed, beholding thee,
First joy—then Immortality.

THE TEARS OF PSAMMENITUS.

Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, made war on Psammenitus of Egypt, and deposed him. His sons were sentenced to death, his daughters to slavery. He saw his children pass to death and to dishonour without apparent emotion, but *wept* on observing a noble, who had been his companion, ask alms of the Persians. Cambyses sent to inquire the reason of his conduct. The substance of his reply was as follows:—

SAY ye I wept? I do not know:—
  There came a sound across my brain,
Which was familiar long ago;
  And, through the hot and crimson stain
That floods the earth and chokes the air,
I saw the waving of white hair—
The palsy of an aged brow;
I should have known it once, but now
One desperate hour hath dashed away
The memory of my kingly day.
Mute, weak, unable to deliver
  That bowed distress of passion pale,
I saw that forehead's tortured quiver,
  And watched the weary footstep fail,
With just as much of sickening thrill
As marked my heart was human still:

Yes, though my breast is bound and barred
With pain, and though that heart is hard,
And though the grief that should have bent
  Hath made me, what ye dare not mock,—
The being of untamed intent,
  Between the tiger and the rock,—
There's that of pity's outward glow
  May bid the tear atone,
In mercy to another's woe,
  For mockery of its own;
It is not cold,—it is not less,
Though yielded in unconsciousness.
And it is well that I can weep,
For in the shadow, not of sleep,
Through which, as with a vain endeavour,
These aged eyes must gaze for ever,
Their tears can catch the only light
That mellows down the mass of night,
For they have seen the curse of sight;
My spirit guards the dread detail,
And wears their vision like a veil.

They saw the low Pelusian shore
Grow warm with death and dark with gore,
  When, on those widely-watered fields,
Shivered and sank, betrayed, oppressed,
Ionian sword and Carian crest,*

* The Ionians and Carians were faithful auxiliaries of the Egyptian kings, from the beginning of the reign of Psammenitus. The helmet crest was invented by the Carians.

And Egypt's shade of shields:
They saw—oh God! they still must see,
That dream of long, dark agony,
A vision passing, never past,
A troop of kingly forms, that cast
Cold, quivering shadows of keen pain,
In bars of darkness, o'er my brain:
I see them move,—I hear them tread,
Each his untroubled eyes declining,
Though fierce in front, and swift and red
The Eastern sword is sheathless shining.
I hear them tread,—the earth doth not!
Alas! its echoes have forgot
The fiery steps that shook the shore
With their swift pride in days of yore.
In vain, in vain, in wrath arrayed,
Shall Egypt wave her battle-blade;
It cannot cleave the dull death-shade,
Where, sternly checked and lowly laid,
Despised, dishonoured, and betrayed,
That pride is past, those steps are stayed.

Oh! would I were as those who sleep
In yonder island lone and low,*
Beside whose shore, obscure and deep,
Sepulchral waters flow,

* Under the hill on which the pyramids of Cheops were erected were excavated vaults, around which a stream from the Nile was carried by a subterraneous passage. These were sepulchres for the kings, and Cheops was buried there himself. —*Herod.*, II. 187.

And wake, with beating pause, like breath,
Their pyramidal place of death;
For it is cool and quiet there,
  And on the calm frankincensed clay
Passes no change, and this despair
  Shrinks like the baffled worm, their prey
Alike impassive. I forget
  The thoughts of him who sent ye here:
Bear back these words, and say, though yet
  The shade of this unkingly fear
  Hath power upon my brow, no tear
Hath quenched the curse within mine eyes;
And, by that curse's fire,
  I see the doom that shall possess
His hope, his passion, his desire,
  His life, his strength, his nothingness.
I see, across the desert led,*
  A plumèd host, on whom distress
Of fear and famine hath been shed;
  Before them lies the wilderness,—
Behind, along the path they tread,
  If death make desolation less,
There lie a company of dead
  Who cover the sand's hot nakedness
With a cool moist bed of human clay,
A soil and a surface of slow decay:

* Cambyses, after subduing Egypt, led an army against the Ethiopians. He was checked by famine. Persisting in his intention until the troops were obliged to kill every tenth man for food, he lost the greater part of his army.

Through the dense and lifeless heap
  Irregularly rise
Short shuddering waves that heave and creep,
Like spasms that plague the guilty sleep;
  And where the motion dies,
A moaning mixes with the purple air.
They have not fallen in fight; the trace
  Of war hath not passed by;
There is no fear on any face,
  No wrath in any eye.
They have laid them down with bows unbent,
With swords unfleshed and innocent,
In the grasp of that famine whose gradual thrill
Is fiercest to torture, and longest to kill:
Stretched in one grave on the burning plain
Coiled together in knots of pain,
Where the dead are twisted in skeleton writhe,
With the mortal pangs of the living and lithe;
Soaking into the sand below,
With the drip of the death-dew, heavy and slow;
Mocking the heaven that heard no prayer,
With the lifted hand and the lifeless stare
With the lifted hand, whose tremorless clay,
Though powerless to combat, is patient to pray,
And the glance that reflects, in its vain address,
Heaven's blue from its own white lifelessness;
Heaped for a feast on the venomous ground,
For the howling jackal and herded hound;
With none that can watch, and with few that will weep,

By the home they have left, or the home they must keep,
The strength hath been lost from the desolate land,
Once fierce as the simoom, now frail as the sand.

Not unavenged: their gathered wrath
Is dark along its desert path,
Nor strength shall bide, nor madness fly
The anger of their agony;
For every eye, though sunk and dim,
And every lip, in its last need,
Hath looked and breathed a plague on him
Whose pride they fell to feed.
The dead remember well and long,
And they are cold of heart, and strong.
They died, they cursed thee; not in vain!
Along the river's reedy plain
Behold a troop,—a shadowy crowd—
Of godlike spectres, pale and proud;
In concourse calm they move and meet;
The desert billows at their feet
Heave like the sea when, deep distressed,
The waters pant in their unrest.
Robed in a whirl of pillared sand
Avenging Ammon glides supreme;*
The red sun smoulders in his hand,
And, round about his brows, the gleam,

* Cambyses sent 50,000 men to burn the temple of the Egyptian Jove or Ammon. They plunged into the desert, and were never heard of more. It was reported they were overwhelmed with sand.

As of a broad and burning fold
Of purple wind, is wrapped and rolled.*

With failing frame and lingering tread,
Stern Apis follows, wild and worn;†
The blood by mortal madness shed,
Frozen on his white limbs, anguish-torn.
What soul can bear, what strength can brook
The god-distress that fills his look?
The dreadful light of fixed disdain,
The fainting wrath, the flashing pain
Bright to decree or to confess
Another's fate—its own distress—
A mingled passion and appeal,
Dark to inflict and deep to feel.
Who are these that flitting follow
Indistinct and numberless?
As through the darkness, cold and hollow,
Of some hopeless dream, there press
Dim, delirious shapes that dress
Their white limbs with folds of pain:

* The simoom is rendered visible by its purple tone of colour.

† The god Apis occasionally appeared in Egypt under the form of a handsome bull. He imprudently visited his worshippers immediately after Cambyses had returned from Ethiopia with the loss of his army and reason. Cambyses heard of his appearance, and insisted on seeing him. The officiating priests introduced Cambyses to the bull. The king looked with little respect on a deity whose divinity depended on the number of hairs in his tail, drew his dagger, wounded Apis in the thigh, and scourged all the priests. Apis died. From that time the insanity of Cambyses became evident, and he was subject to the violent and torturing passions described in the succeeding lines.

See the swift mysterious train—
  Forms of fixed, unbodied feeling,—
Fixed, but in a fiery trance
Of wildering mien and lightning glance,
  Each its inward power revealing
Through its quivering countenance;
Visible living agonies,
  Wild with everlasting motion,
Memory with her dark, dead eyes,
Tortured thoughts that useless rise,
  Late remorse and vain devotion;
Dreams of cruelty and crime,
Unmoved by rage, untamed by time;
Of fierce design, and fell delaying,
  Quenched affection, strong despair,
Wan disease, and madness playing
  With her own pale hair.
The last, how woeful and how wild!
  Enrobed with no diviner dread
Than that one smile, so sad, so mild,
  Worn by the human dead;
A spectre thing, whose pride of power
  Is vested in its pain,
Becoming dreadful in the hour
  When what it seems was slain.
Bound with the chill that checks the sense,
  It moves in spasm-like spell:
It walks in that dead impotence,—
  How weak, how terrible!

Cambyses, when thy summoned hour
Shall pause on Ecbatana's tower,
Though barbed with guilt, and swift, and fierce,
Unnumbered pangs thy soul shall pierce,
The last, the worst thy heart can prove,
Must be that brother's look of love;*
That look that once shone but to bless,
Then changed, how mute, how merciless!
His blood shall bathe thy brow, his pain
Shall bind thee with a burning chain:
His arms shall drag, his wrath shall thrust
Thy soul to death, thy throne to dust;
Thy memory darkened with disgrace,
Thy kingdom wrested from thy race,†
Condemned of God, accursed of men,
Lord of my grief, remember then,
The tears of him—who will not weep again.

* Cambyses caused his brother Smerdis to be slain, suspecting him of designs on the throne. This deed he bitterly repented of on his death-bed, being convinced of the innocence of his brother.

† Treacherously seized by Smerdis the Magus, afterwards attained by Darius Hystaspes, through the instrumentality of his groom. Cambyses died in the Syrian Ecbatana, of a wound accidentally received in the part of the thigh where he had wounded Apis.

THE TWO PATHS.

I.

THE paths of life are rudely laid
  Beneath the blaze of burning skies;
Level and cool, in cloistered shade,
  The church's pavement lies.
Along the sunless forest-glade
  Its gnarlèd roots are coiled like crime;
Where glows the grass with freshening blade,
  Thine eyes may track the serpent's slime;
But there thy steps are unbetrayed,—
  The serpent waits a surer time.

II.

The fires of earth are fiercely blent,
  Its suns arise with scorching glow;
The church's light hath soft descent,
  And hues like God's own bow.
The brows of men are darkly bent,
  Their lips are wreathed with scorn and guile;
But pure, and pale, and innocent,
  The looks that light the marble aisle—

From angel eyes, in love intent,
And lips of everlasting smile.

III.

Lady, the fields of earth are wide,
And tempt an infant's foot to stray:
Oh! lead thy loved one's steps aside,
Where the white altar lights his way.
Around his path shall glance and glide
A thousand shadows false and wild;
Oh! lead him to that surer Guide
Than sire serene, or mother mild,
Whose Childhood quelled the age of pride,—
Whose Godhead called the little child.

IV.

So, when thy breast of love untold,
That warmed his sleep of infancy,
Shall only make the marble cold
Beneath his aged knee,
From its steep throne of heavenly gold
Thy soul shall stoop to see
His grief, that cannot be controlled,
Turning to God from thee—
Cleaving with prayer the cloudy fold
That veils the Sanctuary.

MILL at BAVENO
1845.

THE OLD WATER-WHEEL.

IT lies beside the river, where its marge
Is black with many an old and oarless barge,
And yeasty filth, and leafage wild and rank
Stagnate and batten by the crumbling bank.

Once, slow revolving by the industrious mill,
It murmured, only on the Sabbath still;
And evening winds its pulse-like beating bore
Down the soft vale, and by the winding shore.

Sparkling around its orbèd motion flew,
With quick, fresh fall, the drops of dashing dew;
Through noontide heat that gentle rain was flung,
And verdant round the summer herbage sprung.

Now dancing light and sounding motion cease,
In these dark hours of cold, continual peace;
Through its black bars the unbroken moonlight flows,
And dry winds howl about its long repose;

And mouldering lichens creep, and mosses grey
Cling round its arms, in gradual decay,
Amidst the hum of men—which doth not suit
That shadowy circle, motionless and mute.

So, by the sleep of many a human heart,
The crowd of men may bear their busy part,
Where withered, or forgotten, or subdued,
Its noisy passions have left solitude:

Ah! little can they trace the hidden truth!
What waves have moved it in the vale of youth!
And little can its broken chords avow
How once they sounded. All is silent now.

THE DEPARTED LIGHT.

THOU know'st the place where purple rocks receive
The deepened silence of the pausing stream;
And myrtles and white olives interweave
Their cool, grey shadows with the azure gleam
Of noontide; and pale temple-columns cleave
Those waves with shafts of light (as, through a dream
Of sorrow, pierce the memories of loved hours—
Cold and fixed thoughts that will not pass away)
All chapleted with wreaths of marble flowers,
Too calm to live,—too lovely to decay.
And hills rise round, pyramidal and vast,
Like tombs built of blue heaven, above the clay
Of those who worshipped here, whose steps have past
To silence—leaving o'er the waters cast
The light of their religion. There, at eve,
That gentle dame would walk, when night-birds make
The starry myrtle-blossoms pant and heave
With waves of ceaseless song; she would awake
The lulled air with her kindling thoughts, and leave
Her voice's echo on the listening lake;
The quenched rays of her beauty would deceive
Its depths into quick joy. Hill, wave, and brake

Grew living as she moved: I did believe
That they were lovely, only for her sake;
But now—she is not there—at least, the chill
Hath passed upon her which no sun shall break.
Stranger, my feet must shun the lake and hill:—
Seek them,—but dream not they are lovely still.

AGONIA.

WHEN our delight is desolate,
And hope is overthrown;
And when the heart must bear the weight
Of its own love alone;

And when the soul, whose thoughts are deep,
Must guard them unrevealed,
And feel that it is full, but keep
That fulness calm and sealed;

When Love's long glance is dark with pain—
With none to meet or cheer;
And words of woe are wild in vain
For those who cannot hear;

When earth is dark, and memory
Pale in the heaven above,
The heart can bear to lose its joy,
But not to cease to love.

But what shall guide the choice within,
Of guilt or agony,—
When to remember is to sin,
And to forget—to die?

1841.

AT THE AGE OF 22 YEARS.

The Last Song of Arion.
The Hills of Carrara

THE LAST SONG OF ARION.

ἰὼ λιγείας μόρον ἀηδόνος.
. . . κύκνου δίκην
τὸν ὕστατον μέλψασα θανάσιμον γόον.
[ÆSCH. *Agam.*, 1145, 1444.]

The circumstances which led to the introduction of Arion to his Dolphin are differently related by Herodotus and Lucian. Both agree that he was a musician of the highest order, born at Methymna, in the island of Lesbos, and that he acquired fame and fortune at the court of Periander of Corinth. Herodotus affirms that he became desirous of seeing Italy and Sicily, and having made a considerable fortune in those countries, hired a Corinthian vessel to take him back to Corinth. When half-way over the gulf, the mariners conceived the idea of seizing the money, and throwing the musician into the sea. Arion started several objections, but finding that they were overruled, requested that he might be permitted to sing them a song. Permission being granted, he wreathed himself and his harp with flowers,—sang, says Lucian, in the sweetest way in the world, and leaped into the sea. The historian proceeds, with less confidence, to state that a dolphin carried him safe ashore. Lucian agrees with this account, except in one particular; he makes no mention of the journey to Sicily, and supposes Arion to have been returning from Corinth to his native Lesbos, when the attack was made on him. I have taken him to Sicily with Herodotus, but prefer sending him straight home. He is more interesting returning to his country than paying his respects at the court of Corinth.

I.

LOOK not upon me thus impatiently,
Ye children of the deep;

My fingers fail, and tremble as they try
To stir the silver sleep with song,
Which, underneath the surge ye sweep,
These lulled and listless chords must keep—
Alas—how long!

II.

The salt sea wind has touched my heart; its thrill
Follows the passing plectrum, low, and chill;
Woe for the wakened pulse of Ocean's breath,
That injures these with silence—me, with death.
Oh! wherefore stirred the wind on Pindus' chain,
When joyful morning called me to the main?
Flashed the keen oars—our canvas, filled and free,
Shook like white fire along the purple sea;
Fast from the helm the shattering surges flew,
Pale gleamed our path along their cloven blue;
And orient path, wild wind, and purple wave,
Pointed and urged and guided—to the grave.

III.

Ye winds! by far Methymna's steep,
I loved your voices long;
And gave your spirits power to keep
Wild syllables of song.
When, folded in the crimson shade
That veils Olympus' cloud-like whiteness,
The slumber of your life was laid
In the lull of its own likeness,

Poised on the voiceless ebb and flow
Of the beamy-billowed summer snow,
Still at my call ye came—
Through the thin wreaths of undulating flame
That, panting in their heavenly home,
With crimson shadows flush the foam
Of Adramyttium, round the ravined hill,
Awakened with one deep and living thrill;—
Ye came, and, with your steep descent,
The hollow forests waved and bent;
Their leaf-lulled echoes caught the winding call
Through incensed glade and rosy dell,
Mixed with the breath-like pause and swell
Of waters following in eternal fall,
In azure waves, that just betray
The music quivering in their spray,
Beneath its silent sevenfold arch of day;
High in pale precipices hung
The lifeless rocks of rigid marble rung,
Waving the cedar crests along their brows sublime;
Swift ocean heard beneath, and flung
His tranced and trembling waves in measured time,
Along his golden sands with faintly falling chime.

IV.

Alas! had ye forgot the joy I gave,
That ye did hearken to my call this day?
Oh! had ye slumbered—when your sleep could save,

I would have fed you with sweet sound for aye;
Now ye have risen to bear my silent soul away.

V.

I heard ye murmur through the Etnæan caves,
When joyful dawn had touched the topmost dome;—
I saw ye light, along the mountain waves
Far to the east, your beacon-fires of foam,
And deemed ye rose to bear your weary minstrel home.
Home? it shall be that home indeed,
Where tears attend and shadows lead
The steps of man's return;
Home! woe is me, no home I need,
Except the urn.
Behold—beyond these billows' flow,
I see Methymna's mountains glow;
Long, long desired, their peaks of light
Flash on my sickened soul and sight,
And heart and eye almost possess
Their vales of long-lost pleasantness;
But eye and heart, before they greet
That land, shall cease to burn and beat.
I see, between the sea and land,
The winding belt of golden sand;
But never may my footsteps reach
The brightness of that Lesbian beach,
Unless, with pale and listless limb,
Stretched by the water's utmost brim,
Naked, beneath my native sky,

With bloodless brow, and darkened eye,
An unregarded ghastly heap,
For bird to tear and surge to sweep,—
Too deadly calm—too coldly weak,
To reck of billow, or of beak.

VI.

My native isle! when I have been
  Reft of my love, and far from thee,
My dreams have traced, my soul hath seen
  Thy shadow on the sea,
And waked in joy, but not to seek
Thy winding strand or purple peak;
For strand and peak had waned away
Before the desolating day,
  On Acro-Corinth redly risen,
That burned above Ægina's bay,
  And laughed upon my palace-prison.
How soft on other eyes it shone,
When light, and land, were all their own!
I looked across the eastern brine,
And knew *that* morning was not mine.

VII.

But thou art near me now, dear isle!
And I can see the lightning smile
By thy broad beach, that flashes free
Along the pale lips of the sea.
Near, nearer, louder, breaking, beating,

The billows fall with ceaseless shower;
It comes,—dear isle!—our hour of meeting—
O God! across the soft eyes of the hour
Is thrown a black and blinding veil;
Its steps are swift, its brow is pale,
Before its face, behold—there stoop,
From their keen wings, a darkening troop
Of forms like unto it—that fade
Far in unfathomable shade;
Confused, and limitless, and hollow,
It comes, but there are none that follow—
It pauses, as they paused, but not
Like them to pass away;
For I must share its shadowy lot,
And walk with it, where, wide and grey,
That caverned twilight chokes the day,
And, underneath the horizon's starless line,
Shall drink, like feeble dew, its life and mine.

VIII.

Farewell, sweet harp! for lost and quenched
Thy swift and sounding fire shall be;
And these faint lips be mute and blenched,
That once so fondly followed thee.
Oh! deep within the winding shell
The slumbering passions haunt and dwell,
As memories of its ocean tomb
Still gush within its murmuring gloom;
But closed the lips, and faint the fingers

Of fiery touch, and woven words,
To rouse the flame that clings and lingers
Along the loosened chords.
Farewell! thou silver-sounding lute,—
I must not wake thy wildness more,
When I and thou lie dead, and mute,
Upon the hissing shore.

IX.

The sounds I summon fall and roll
In waves of memory, o'er my soul;
And there are words I should not hear,
That murmur in my dying ear,
Distant all, but full and clear,
Like a child's footstep in its fear,
Falling in Colonos' wood,
When the leaves are sere;
And waves of black, tumultuous blood
Heave and gush about my heart;
Each a deep and dismal mirror
Flashing back its broken part
Of visible and changeless terror;
And fiery foam-globes leap and shiver
Along that crimson, living river:
Its surge is hot, its banks are black,
And weak, wild thoughts that once were bright,
And dreams, and hopes of dead delight,
Drift on its desolating track,
And lie along its shore:

Oh! who shall give that brightness back,
Or those lost hopes restore?
Or bid that light of dreams be shed
On the glazed eyeballs of the dead?
The lonely search of love may cease,
Bourned by the side of earthly graves;
But sorrow finds no place of peace
Amidst the wildly walking waves.
Oh! many a thought my soul has sent,
And many a dim and yearning dream—
They seem to tread, with steps intent,
Their hopeless haunt of long lament;
Beside the shore of Cynoseme,*
The bright oars beat by the sea-swan's roost;
They are waked with the cry of the keen keleust,†
But the life of the earth and the smile of the sky
Are above a cold heart and a lustreless eye.

X.

That light of dreams! My soul hath cherished
One dream too fondly, and too long;
Hope—dread—desire—delight have perished,
And every thought whose voice was strong
To curb the heart to good, or wrong;
But that sweet dream is with me still,
Like the shade of an eternal hill,
Cast on a calm and narrow lake,

* Cynoseme, a promontory in the Hellespont.
† The "keleust," in the Greek galleys, timed the stroke of the oar.

That hath no room except for it—and heaven:
It doth not leave me, nor forsake;
And often with my soul hath striven
To quench or calm its worst distress,
Its silent sense of loneliness.
And must it leave me now?
Alas! dear lady, where my steps must tread,
What 'vails the echo or the glow,
That word can leave, or smile can shed,
Among the soundless, lightless dead?
Soft o'er my brain the lulling dews shall fall,
While I sleep on, beneath the heavy sea,
Coldly,—I shall not hear though thou shouldst call.
Deeply,—I shall not dream,—not even of thee.

XI.

And when my thoughts to peace depart
Beneath the unpeaceful foam,
Wilt thou remember him, whose heart
Hath ceased to be thy home?
Nor bid thy breast its love subdue
For one no longer fond nor true;
Thine ears have heard a treacherous tale,
My words were false,—my faith was frail.
I feel the grasp of death's white hand
Laid heavy on my brow,
And from the brain those fingers brand,
The chords of memory drop like sand,
And faint in muffled murmurs die

The passionate word, the fond reply,
The deep redoubled vow.
Oh! dear Ismene, flushed and bright
Although thy beauty burn,
It cannot wake to love's delight
The crumbling ashes, quenched and white,
Nor pierce the apathy of night
Within the marble urn:
Let others wear the chains I wore,
And worship at the unhonoured shrine—
For me, the chain is strong no more,
No more the voice divine:
Go forth, and look on those that live,
And robe thee with the love they give,
But think no more of mine;
Or think of all that pass thee by,
With heedless heart and unveiled eye,
That none can love thee *less* than I.

XII.

Farewell! but do not grieve; thy pain
Would seek me where I sleep;
Thy tears would pierce, like rushing rain,
The stillness of the deep.
Remember, if thou wilt, but do not weep.
Farewell, beloved hills, and native isle:
Farewell to earth's delight, to heaven's smile;
Farewell to sounding air, to purple sea;
Farewell to light,—to life,—to love,—to thee!

At CARRARA.

Ravines cut by weather and wavy structure, in hard rock
– (Crystalline marble.)

THE HILLS OF CARRARA.

I.

AMIDST a vale of springing leaves,
Where spreads the vine its wandering root,
And cumbrous fall the autumnal sheaves,
And olives shed their sable fruit,
And gentle winds and waters never mute
Make of young boughs and pebbles pure
One universal lute,
And bright birds, through the myrtle copse obscure,
Pierce, with quick notes, and plumage dipped in dew,
The silence and the shade of each lulled avenue,—

II.

Far in the depths of voiceless skies,
Where calm and cold the stars are strewed,
The peaks of pale Carrara rise.
Nor sound of storm, nor whirlwind rude,

* The mountains of Carrara, from which nearly all the marble now used in sculpture is derived, form by far the finest piece of hill scenery I know in Italy. They rise out of valleys of exquisite richness, being themselves singularly desolate, magnificent in form, and noble in elevation; but without forests on their flanks, and without one blade of grass on their summits.

Can break their chill of marble solitude;
The crimson lightnings round their crest
May hold their fiery feud—
They hear not, nor reply; their chasmèd rest
No flow'ret decks, nor herbage green, nor breath
Of moving thing can change their atmosphere of death.

III.

But far beneath, in folded sleep,
Faint forms of heavenly life are laid,
With pale brows and soft eyes, that keep
Sweet peace of unawakened shade;
Whose wreathèd limbs, in robes of rock arrayed,
Fall like white waves on human thought,
In fitful dreams displayed;
Deep through their secret homes of slumber sought,
They rise immortal, children of the day,
Gleaming with godlike forms on earth, and her decay.

IV.

Yes, where the bud hath brightest germ,
And broad the golden blossoms glow,
There glides the snake, and works the worm,
And black the earth is laid below.
Ah! think not thou the souls of men to know,
By outward smiles in wildness worn:
The words that jest at woe
Spring not less lightly, though the heart be torn—

The mocking heart, that scarcely dares confess,
Even to itself, the strength of its own bitterness.

V.

Nor deem that they whose words are cold,
Whose brows are dark, have hearts of steel;
The couchant strength, untraced, untold,
Of thoughts they keep, and throbs they feel,
May need an answering music to unseal;
Who knows what waves may stir the silent sea,
Beneath the low appeal,
From distant shores, of winds unfelt by thee?
What sounds may wake within the winding shell,
Responsive to the charm of those who touch it well!

1842.

AT THE AGE OF 23 YEARS.

CHARITIE.

CHARITIE.

I.

THE beams of morning are renewed,
The valley laughs their light to see;
And earth is bright with gratitude,
And heaven with Charitie.

II.

Oh, dew of heaven! Oh, light of earth!
Fain would our hearts be filled with thee,
Because nor darkness comes, nor dearth,
About the home of Charitie.

III.

God guides the stars their wandering way,
He seems to cast their courses free;
But binds unto Himself for aye,
And all their chains are Charitie.

IV.

When first He stretched the signèd zone,
And heaped the hills, and barred the sea,
Then Wisdom sat beside His throne;
But His own Word was Charitie.

V.

And still, through every age and hour,
Of things that were and things that be,
Are breathed the presence and the power
Of everlasting Charitie.

VI.

By noon and night, by sun and shower,
By dews that fall and winds that flee,
On grove and field, on fold and flower,
Is shed the peace of Charitie.

VII.

The violets light the lonely hill,
The fruitful furrows load the lea;
Man's heart alone is sterile still
For lack of lowly Charitie.

VIII.

He walks a weary vale within,—
No lamp of love in heart hath he;
His steps are death, his thoughts are sin,
For lack of gentle Charitie.

IX.

Daughter of heaven! we dare not lift
The dimness of our eyes to thee;
Oh, pure and God-descended gift!
Oh, spotless, perfect Charitie!

X.

Yet forasmuch thy brow is crossed
With blood-drops from the deathful tree,
We take thee for our only trust,
Oh, dying Charitie!

XI.

Ah! Hope, Endurance, Faith,—ye fail like death,
But Love an everlasting crown receiveth;
For she is Hope, and Fortitude, and Faith,
Who all things hopeth, beareth, and believeth.

1843.

THE AGE OF 24 YEARS.

THE BATTLE OF MONTENOTTE.
A WALK IN CHAMOUNI.

THE BATTLE OF MONTENOTTE.

"My patent of nobility" (said Napoleon) "dates from the Battle of Montenotte."

I.

SLOW lifts the night her starry host
  Above the mountain chain
That guards the grey Ligurian coast,
  And lights the Lombard plain;
That plain, that, softening on the sight,
Lies blue beneath the balm of night,
With lapse of rivers lulled, that glide
In lustre broad of living tide;
Or pause for hours of peace beside
The shores they double, and divide,
To feed with heaven's reverted hue
The clustered vine's expanding blue.
With crystal flow, for evermore,
They lave a blood-polluted shore;
Ah! not the snows, whose wreaths renew
Their radiant depth with stainless dew,
Can bid their banks be pure, or bless
The guilty land with holiness.

II.

In stormy waves whose wrath can reach
The rocks that back the topmost beach,
The midnight sea falls wild and deep
Around Savona's marble steep,
And Voltri's crescent bay.
What fiery lines are these that flash
Where fierce the breakers curl and crash,
And fastest flies the spray?
No moon has risen to mark the night,
Nor such the flakes of phosphor light
That wake along the southern wave,
By Baiæ's cliff and Capri's cave,
Until the dawn of day:
The phosphor flame is soft and green
Beneath the hollow surges seen;
But these are dyed with dusky red
Far on the fitful surface shed;
And evermore, their glance between,
The mountain gust is deeply stirred
With low vibration, felt, and heard,
Which winds and leaves confuse, in vain;
It gathers through their maze again,
Redoubling round the rocks it smote,
Till falls in fear the night-bird's note;
And every sound beside is still,
But plash of torrent from the hill,

And murmur by the branches made
That bend above its bright cascade.

III.

Hark, hark! the hollow Apennine
Laughs in his heart afar;
Through all his vales he drinks like wine
The deepening draught of war;
For not with doubtful burst, or slow,
That thunder shakes his breathless snow,
But ceaseless rends, with rattling stroke,
The veils of white volcano-smoke
That o'er Legino's ridges rest,*
And writhe in Merla's vale:
There lifts the Frank his triple crest,
Crowned with its plumage pale;

* The Austrian centre, 10,000 strong, had been advanced to Montenotte, in order, if possible, to cut asunder the French force, which was following the route of the Corniche. It encountered at Montenotte only Colonel Rampon, at the head of 1200 men, who retiring to the redoubt at Monte Legino, defended it against the repeated attacks of the Austrians until nightfall—making his soldiers swear to conquer or die. The Austrian General Roccavina was severely wounded, and his successor, D'Argenteau, refused to continue the attack. Napoleon was lying at Savona, but set out after sunset with the divisions of Massena and Serrurier, and occupied the heights at Montenotte. At daybreak the Imperialists found themselves surrounded on all sides, and were totally defeated, with the loss of two thousand prisoners, and above one thousand killed and wounded. (April 12, 1796.)

This victory, the first gained by Napoleon, was the foundation of the success of the Italian campaign. Had Colonel Rampon been compelled to retire from Monte Legino, the fate of the world would probably have been changed.—*Vide* Alison, ch. 20.

Though, clogged and dyed with stains of death,
It scarce obeys the tempest's breath;
And darker still, and deadlier press
The war-clouds on its weariness.
Far by the bright Bormida's banks
The Austrian cheers his chosen ranks,
In ponderous waves, that, where they check
Rise o'er their own tumultuous wreck,
Recoiling—crashing—gathering still
In rage around that Island hill,
Where stand the moveless Few—
Few—fewer as the moments flit;
Though shaft and shell their columns split
As morning melts the dew,
Though narrower yet their guarding grows,
And hot the heaps of carnage close,
In death's faint shade and fiery shock,
They stand, one ridge of living rock,
Which steel may rend, and wave may wear,
And bolt may crush, and blast may tear,
But none can strike from its abiding:
The flood, the flash, the steel, may bear
Perchance destruction—*not* despair,
And death—but not dividing.
What matter? while their ground they keep,
Though here a column—there a heap—
Though these in wrath—and those in sleep,
If all are there.

IV.

Charge, D'Argenteau! Fast flies the night,
The snows look wan with inward light:
Charge, D'Argenteau! Thy kingdom's power
Wins not again this hope—nor hour:
The force—the fate of France is thrown
Behind those feeble shields;
That ridge of death-defended stone
Were worth a thousand fields!
In vain—in vain! Thy broad array
Breaks on their front of spears like spray:
Thine hour hath struck—the dawning red
Is o'er thy wavering standards shed;
A darker dye thy folds shall take
Before its utmost beams can break.

V.

Out of its Eastern fountains
The river of day is drawn,
And the shadows of the mountains
March downward from the dawn,—
The shadows of the ancient hills,
Shortening as they go,
Down beside the dancing rills
Wearily and slow.
The morning wind the mead hath kissed;
It leads in narrow lines

The shadows of the silver mist,
To pause among the pines.
But where the sun is calm and hot,
And where the wind hath peace,
There is a shade that pauseth not,
And a sound that doth not cease.
The shade is like a sable river
Broken with sparkles bright;
The sound is like dead leaves that shiver
In the decay of night.

VI.

Together came with pulse-like beat
The darkness, and the tread—
A motion calm—a murmur sweet,
Yet dreadful both, and dread;
Poised on the hill,—a fringèd shroud,
It wavered like the sea;
Then clove itself, as doth a cloud,
In sable columns three.
They fired no shot,—they gave no sign,—
They blew no battle-peal;
But down they came, in deadly line,
Like whirling bars of steel.
As fades the forest from its place,
Beneath the lava flood,
The Austrian host, before their face,
Was melted into blood:
They moved, as moves the solemn night,

With lulling, and release;
Before them, all was fear and flight,
Behind them, all was peace:
Before them flashed the roaring glen
With bayonet and brand;
Behind them lay the wrecks of men,
Like seaweed on the sand.

VII.

But still, along the cumbered heath,
A vision strange and fair
Did fill the eyes that failed in death,
And darkened in despair;
Where blazed the battle wild and hot,
A youth, deep-eyed and pale,
Did move amidst the storm of shot,
As the fire of God through hail,
He moved, serene as spirits are,
And dying eyes might see
Above his head a crimson star
Burning continually.

. . . . . .

VIII.

With bended head, and breathless tread,
The traveller tracks that silent shore,
Oppressed with thoughts that seek the dead,
And visions that restore;
Or lightly trims his pausing bark,

Where lies the ocean lulled and dark, *
Beneath the marble mounds that stay
The strength of many a bending bay,
And lace with silver lines the flow
Of tideless waters to and fro,
As drifts the breeze, or dies;
That scarce recalls its lightness, left
In many a purple-curtained cleft,
Whence to the softly lighted skies
Low flowers lift up their dark blue eyes,
To bring by fits the deep perfume
Alternate, as the bending bloom
Diffuses or denies.
Above, the slopes of mountain shine,
Where glows the citron, glides the vine,
And breathes the myrtle wildly bright,
And aloes lift their lamps of light,
And ceaseless sunbeams clothe the calm
Of orbèd pine and vaulted palm;
Dark trees, that sacred order keep,
And rise in temples o'er the steep—
Eternal shrines, whose columned shade
Though winds may shake, and frosts may fade,

* The view given in the engraving, though not near the scene of the battle, is very characteristic of the general features of the coast. The ruins in the centre are the Chateau de Cornolet, near Mentone; the sharp dark promontory running out beyond, to the left, is the Capo St. Martin; that beyond it is the promontory of Monaco. Behind the hills, on the right, lies the Bay of Nice and the point of Antibes. The dark hills in the extreme distance rise immediately above Fréjus. Among them winds the magnificent Pass de l'Esterelle, which, for richness of Southern forest scenery, and for general grace of mountain outline, surpasses anything on the Corniche itself.

The Coast of Genoa.

And dateless years subdue,
Is softly builded, ever new,
By angel hands, and wears the dread
And stillness of a sacred place,—
A sadness of celestial grace,—
A shadow, God-inhabited.

IX.

And all is peace, around, above,
The air all balm—the light all love,—
Enduring love, that burns and broods
Serenely o'er these solitudes;
Or pours at intervals a part
Of Heaven upon the wanderer's heart,
Whose subject soul and quiet thought
Are open to be touched, or taught,
By mute address of bud and beam,
Of purple peak and silver stream,—
By sounds that fall at Nature's choice,
And things whose being is their voice,
Innumerable tongues that teach
The will and ways of God to men,
In waves that beat the lonely beach,
And winds that haunt the homeless glen,
Where they, who ruled the rushing deep,
The restless and the brave,
Have left along their native steep
The ruin and the grave.

X.

And he who gazes while the day
Departs along the boundless bay,
May find against its fading streak
The shadow of a single peak,
Seen only when the surges smile,
And all the heaven is clear,
That sad and solitary isle,*
Where, captive, from his red career,
He sank—who shook the hemisphere;
Then, turning from the hollow sea,
May trace, across the crimsoned height
That saw his earliest victory,
The purple rainbow's resting light,
And the last lines of storm that fade
Within the peaceful evening shade.

* Elba, which is said to be visible from most of the elevated points of this coast. From the citadel of Genoa I have seen what was asserted to be Elba. I believe it to have been Corsica.

THE GLACIER DES BOIS.

1843

A WALK IN CHAMOUNI.

TOGETHER on the valley, white and sweet,
The dew and silence of the morning lay:
Only the tread of my disturbing feet
Did break, with printed shade and patient beat,
The crispèd stillness of the meadow way;
And frequent mountain waters, welling up
In crystal gloom beneath some mouldering stone,
Curdled in many a flower-enamelled cup,
Whose soft and purple border, scarcely blown,
Budded beneath their touch, and trembled to their tone.

The fringèd branches of the swinging pines
Closed o'er my path; a darkness in the sky,
That barred its dappled vault with rugged lines
And silver network,*—interwoven signs
Of dateless age and deathless infancy;
Then through their aisles a motion and a brightness
Kindled and shook—the weight of shade they bore
On their broad arms was lifted by the lightness

* The white mosses on the melèze, when the tree is very old, are singularly beautiful, resembling frost-work of silver.

Of a soft, shuddering wind, and what they wore
Of jewelled dew, was strewed about the forest floor.

That thrill of gushing wind and glittering rain
Onward amid the woodland hollows went;
And bade by turns the drooping boughs complain
O'er the brown earth, that drank in lightless stain
The beauty of their burning ornament;
And then the roar of an enormous river
Came on the intermittent air uplifted;
Broken with haste, I saw its sharp waves shiver,
And its wild weight in white disorder drifted,
Where by its beaten shore the rocks lay heaped and rifted.

But yet unshattered, from an azure arch *
Came forth the nodding waters, wave by wave,
In silver lines of modulated march,
Through a broad desert, which the frost-winds parch
Like fire, and the resounding ice-falls pave
With pallid ruin—wastes of rock—that share
Earth's calm and ocean's fruitlessness.†—Undone
The work of ages lies,—through whose despair
Their swift procession dancing in the sun,
The white and whirling waves pass mocking one by one.

* Source of the Arveron.

† παρὰ θῖν' ἁλὸς ἀτρυγέτοιο.—ΙΛΙΑΔ. Α'., 327.

And with their voice—unquiet melody—
Is filled the hollow of their mighty portal,
As shells are with remembrance of the sea;
So might the eternal arch of Eden be
With angels' wail for those whose crowns immortal
The grave-dust dimmed in passing. There are here,
With azure wings, and scimitars of fire,
Forms as of Heaven, to guard the gate, and rear
Their burning arms afar,—a boundless choir
Beneath the sacred shafts of many a mountain spire.

Countless as clouds, dome, prism, and pyramid
Pierced through the mist of morning scarce withdrawn,
Signing the gloom like beacon-fires, half hid
By storm—part quenched in billows—or forbid
Their function by the fulness of the dawn:
And melting mists and threads of purple rain
Fretted the fair sky where the east was red,
Gliding like ghosts along the voiceless plain,
In rainbow hues around its coldness shed,
Like thoughts of loving hearts that haunt about the dead.

And over these, as pure as if the breath
Of God had called them newly into light,
Free from all stamp of sin, or shade of death,
With which the old creation travaileth,
Rose the white mountains, through the infinite
Of the calm, concave heaven; inly bright

With lustre everlasting and intense;
Serene and universal as the night,
But yet more solemn with pervading sense
Of the deep stillness of Omnipotence.

Deep stillness! for the throbs of human thought,
Count not the lonely night that pauses here;
And the white arch of morning findeth not,
By chasm or alp, a spirit or a spot
Its call can waken or its beams can cheer:
There are no eyes to watch, no lips to meet
Its messages with prayer—no matin-bell
Touches the delicate air with summons sweet;—
That smoke was of the avalanche; * that knell
Came from a tower of ice that into fragments fell.

Ah! why should that be comfortless—why cold,
Which is so near to Heaven? The lowly earth,
Out of the blackness of its charnel mould,
Feeds its fresh life, and lights its banks with gold;
But these proud summits, in eternal dearth,
Whose solitudes nor mourning know, nor mirth,
Rise passionless and pure, but all unblest:
Corruption—must it root the brightest birth?
And is the life that bears its fruitage best
One neither of supremacy nor rest?

* The vapour or dust of dry snow which rises after the fall of a large avalanche, sometimes looks in the distance not unlike the smoke of a village.

1844.

AT THE AGE OF 25 YEARS.

La Madonna dell' Acqua.

The Old Seaman.

The Alps, seen from Marengo.

LA MADONNA DELL' ACQUA.

In the centre of the lagoon between Venice and the mouths of the Brenta, supported on a few mouldering piles, stands a small shrine dedicated to the Madonna dell' Acqua, which the gondolier never passes without a prayer.

AROUND her shrine no earthly blossoms blow,
No footsteps fret the pathway to and fro;
No sign nor record of departed prayer,
Print of the stone, nor echo of the air;
Worn by the lip, nor wearied by the knee,—
Only a deeper silence of the sea:
For there, in passing, pause the breezes bleak,
And the foam fades, and all the waves are weak.
The pulse-like oars in softer fall succeed,
The black prow falters through the wild seaweed—
Where, twilight-borne, the minute thunders reach
Of deep-mouthed surf, that bays by Lido's beach,
With intermittent motion traversed far,
And shattered glancing of the western star,
Till the faint storm-bird on the heaving flow
Drops in white circles, silently like snow.
Not here the ponderous gem nor pealing note,
Dim to adorn—insentient to adore—

But purple-dyed, the mists of evening float,
In ceaseless incense from the burning floor
Of ocean, and the gathered gold of heaven
Laces its sapphire vault, and, early given,
The white rays of the rushing firmament
Pierce the blue-quivering night through wreath or rent
Of cloud inscrutable and motionless,—
Hectic and wan, and moon-companioned cloud!
Oh! lone Madonna—angel of the deep—
When the night falls, and deadly winds are loud,
Will not thy love be with us while we keep
Our watch upon the waters, and the gaze
Of thy soft eyes, that slumber not, nor sleep?
Deem not thou, stranger, that such trust is vain;
Faith walks not on these weary waves alone,
Though weakness dread or apathy disdain
The spot which God has hallowed for His own.
They sin who pass it lightly—ill divining
The glory of this place of bitter prayer;
And hoping against hope, and self-resigning,
And reach of faith, and wrestling with despair,
And resurrection of the last distress,
Into the sense of Heaven, when earth is bare,
And of God's voice, when man's is comfortless.

THE OLD SEAMAN.

I.

YOU ask me why mine eyes are bent
So darkly on the sea,
While others watch the azure hills
That lengthen on the lee.

II.

The azure hills—they soothe the sight
That fails along the foam;
And those may hail their nearing height
Who there have hope or home.

III.

But I a loveless path have trod—
A beaconless career;
My hope hath long been all with God,
And all my home is—*here*.

IV.

The deep by day, the heaven by night
Roll onward, swift and dark;
Nor leave my soul the dove's delight
Of olive branch or ark.

V.

For more than gale, or gulf, or sand,
I've proved that there may be
Worse treachery on the steadfast land
Than variable sea.

VI.

A danger worse than bay or beach—
A falsehood more unkind—
The treachery of a governed speech,
And an ungoverned mind.

VII.

The treachery of the deadly mart
Where human souls are sold;
The treachery of the hollow heart
That crumbles as we hold.

VIII.

Those holy hills and quiet lakes—
Ah! wherefore should I find
This weary fever-fit, that shakes
Their image in my mind?

IX.

The memory of a streamlet's din,
Through meadows daisy-drest—
Another might be glad therein,
And yet I cannot rest.

X.

I cannot rest unless it be
Beneath the churchyard yew;
But God, I think, hath yet for me
More earthly work to do.

XI.

And therefore with a quiet will
I breathe the ocean air,
And bless the voice that calls me still
To wander and to bear.

XII.

Let others seek their native sod,
Who there have hearts to cheer;
My soul hath long been given to God,
And all my home is—*here.*

THE ALPS,

SEEN FROM MARENGO.

THE glory of a cloud—without its wane;
The stillness of the earth—but not its gloom;
The loveliness of life—without its pain;
The peace—but not the hunger—of the tomb!
Ye Pyramids of God! around whose bases
The sea foams noteless in his narrow cup;
And the unseen movements of the earth send up
A murmur which your lulling snow effaces
Like the deer's footsteps. Thrones imperishable!
About whose adamantine steps the breath
Of dying generations vanisheth,
Less cognizable than clouds; and dynasties,
Less glorious and more feeble than the array
Of your frail glaciers, unregarded rise,
Totter and vanish. In the uncounted day,
When earth shall tremble as the trump unwraps
Their sheets of slumber from the crumbling dead,
And the quick, thirsty fire of judgment laps
The loud sea from the hollow of his bed—

Shall not your God spare *you*, to whom He gave
No share nor shadow of man's crime, or fate;
Nothing to render, nor to expiate;
Untainted by his life—untrusted with his grave?

1845.

AT 26 YEARS OF AGE.

Mont Blanc Revisited

The Arve at Cluse.

Mont Blanc.

Written among the Basses Alpes (*Conflans, Early Summer*).

The Glacier.

MONT BLANC REVISITED.

O MOUNT beloved, mine eyes again
Behold the twilight's sanguine stain
  Along thy peaks expire.
O Mount beloved, thy frontier waste
I seek with a religious haste
  And reverent desire.

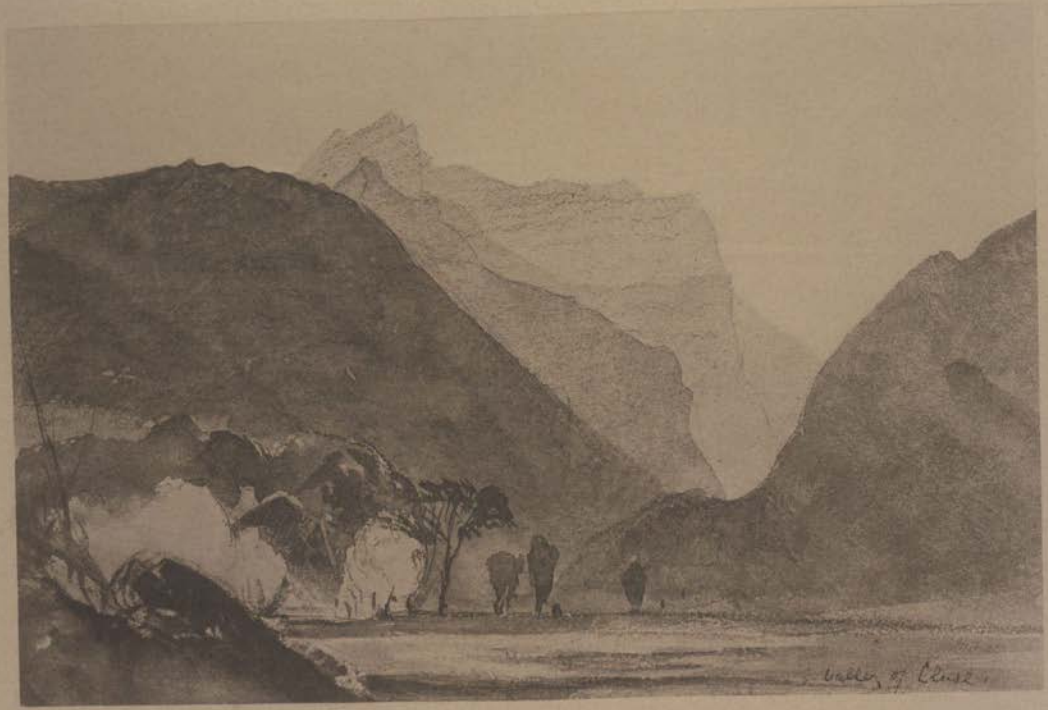
They meet me, 'midst thy shadows cold,
Such thoughts as holy men of old
  Amid the desert found;—
Such gladness, as in Him they felt
Who with them through the darkness dwelt,
  And compassed all around.

Ah! happy, if His will were so,
To give me manna here for snow,
  And by the torrent side
To lead me as He leads His flocks
Of wild deer through the lonely rocks
  In peace, unterrified;

Since from the things that trustful rest,
The partridge on her purple nest,
The marmot in his den,
God wins a worship more resigned,
A purer praise than He can find
Upon the lips of men.

Alas for man! who hath no sense
Of gratefulness nor confidence,
But still regrets and raves,
Till all God's love can scarcely win
One soul from taking pride in sin,
And pleasure over graves.

Yet teach me, God, a milder thought,
Lest I, of all Thy blood has bought,
Least honourable be;
And this that leads me to condemn
Be rather want of love for them,
Than jealousy for Thee.



The Valley of Cluse.

THE ARVE AT CLUSE.

HAST thou no rest, oh, stream perplexed and pale!
That thus forget'st, in thine unhallowed rage,
The pureness of thy mountain parentage?
Unprofitable power! that dost assail
The shore thou should'st refresh, and weariest
The boughs thou shouldest water; whose unrest
Strews thy white whirl with leaves untimely frail.
Fierce river! to whose strength—whose avarice—
The rocks resist not, nor the vales suffice.
Cloven and wasted; fearfully I trace
Backward thy borders, image of my race!
Who born, like thee, near Heaven, have lost, like thee,
Their heritage of peace. Roll on, thus proud,
Impatient, and pollute! I would not see
Thy force less fatal or thy path less free;
But I would cast upon thy waves the cloud
Of passions that are like thee, and baptize
My spirit from its tumult at this Gate
Of Glory, that my lifted heart and eyes,
Purged even by thee from things that desolate

Or darken, may receive, divinely given,
The radiance of that world where all is stilled
In worship, and the sacred mountains build
Their brightness of stability in Heaven.

MONT BLANC.

HE who looks upward from the vale by night,
When the clouds vanish and the winds are stayed,
For ever finds, in Heaven's serenest height,
A space that hath no stars—a mighty shade—
A vacant form, immovably displayed,
Steep in the unstable vault. The planets droop
Behind it; the fleece-laden moonbeams fade;
The midnight constellations, troop by troop,
Depart and leave it with the dawn alone;
Uncomprehended yet, and hardly known
For finite, but by what it takes away
Of the east's purple deepening into day.
Still, for a time, it keeps its awful rest,
Cold as the prophet's pile on Carmel's crest:
Then falls the fire of God.—Far off or near,
Earth and the sea, wide worshipping, descry
That burning altar in the morning sky;
And the strong pines their utmost ridges rear,
Moved like a host, in angel-guided fear
And sudden faith. So stands the Providence
Of God around us; mystery of Love!

Obscure, unchanging, darkness and defence,—
Impenetrable and unmoved above
The valley of our watch; but which shall be
The light of Heaven hereafter, when the strife
Of wandering stars, that rules this night of life,
Dies in the dawning of Eternity.

[LINES]

WRITTEN AMONG THE BASSES ALPES.

It is not among mountain scenery that the human intellect usually takes its finest temper or receives its highest development; but it is at least there that we find a consistent energy of mind and body, compelled by severer character of agencies to be resisted and hardships to be endured; and it is there that we must seek for the last remnants of patriarchal simplicity and patriotic affection—the few rock fragments of manly character that are yet free from the lichenous stain of over-civilisation. It must always, therefore, be with peculiar pain that we find, as in the district to which the following verses allude, the savageness and seclusion of mountain-life without its force and faithfulness; and all the indolence and sensuality of the most debased cities of Europe, without the polish to disguise, the temptation to excuse, or the softness of natural scenery to harmonise with them.

"Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

HAVE you in heaven no hope—on earth no care—
No foe in hell—ye things of stye and stall,
That congregate like flies, and make the air
Rank with your fevered sloth—that hourly call
The sun, which should your servant be, to bear
Dread witness on you, with uncounted wane
And unregarded rays, from peak to peak
Of piny-gnomoned mountain moved in vain?
Behold, the very shadows that ye seek

For slumber, write along the wasted wall
Your condemnation. They forgot not, they,
Their ordered function, and determined fall,
Nor useless perish. But *you* count your day
By sins, and write your difference from clay
In bonds you break, and laws you disobey.
God! who hast given the rocks their fortitude,
The sap unto the forests, and their food
And vigour to the busy tenantry
Of happy, soulless things that wait on Thee,
Hast Thou no blessing where Thou gav'st Thy blood?
Wilt Thou not make Thy fair creation whole?
Behold and visit this Thy vine for good,—
Breathe in this human dust its living soul.

[*Conflans, Early Summer.*]

THE GLACIER.

THE mountains have a peace which none disturb;
The stars and clouds a course which none restrain;
The wild sea-waves rejoice without a curb,
And rest without a passion; but the chain
Of Death, upon this ghastly cliff and chasm,
Is broken evermore, to bind again,
Nor lulls nor looses. Hark! a voice of pain
Suddenly silenced; a quick-passing spasm,
That startles rest, but grants not liberty,—
A shudder, or a struggle, or a cry—
And then sepulchral stillness. Look on us,
God! who hast given these hills their place of pride,
If Death's captivity be sleepless thus,
For those who sink to it unsanctified.

Glacier des Bossons.
1874.

APPENDIX.

POEMS AND FRAGMENTS OF LATER YEARS.

Lucerne Flooded (*August* 31, 1846).

Little Pigs (1857–58).

Awake, Awake [*About* 1865].

Twist ye, Twine ye [*About* 1865].

Rhymes for Music:—

I. "*Joanna's Care*" [1880].

II. The Song in the Queen's Parlour [1880].

III. The Song in the Queen's Garden; Nausicaa [1881]

IV. Trust Thou Thy Love [1881].

Additional Stanzas to "Dame Wiggins of Lee" [1885].

The Pulpit [1886].

Rhymes for Music:—

V. Nursery Drill [1886].

VI. Tennis Interrupted [1886].

VII. Red-Riding-Hood [1886].

VIII. Tea in the Schoolroom [1886].

IX. St. Peter [1887].

X. The Answer, to Baby [*April* 21, 1887].

[LUCERNE FLOODED.]

A rhymed letter in description of the lifted lake and swirling Reuss, to little Louise Ellis (Mr. Telford's niece, at this time one of the happy presences in Widmore), of which a line or two yet remain in my ears, about a market-boat moored above the submerged quay :—

FULL of mealy potatoes and marrowfat pease,
And honey, and butter, and Simmenthal cheese,
And a poor little calf, not at all at its ease
Tied by the neck to a box at its knees.
Don't you agree with me, dear Louise,
It was unjustifiably cruel in
Them to have brought it in all that squeeze
Over the lake from Fluelen ?

[*Lucerne, August 31st*, 1846. *Journal quoted in Præterita*, II. x.]

[LITTLE PIGS.]

I became so resigned to the adoption of my paternally chosen crest * as to write my rhymed letters most frequently in my heraldic character of "Little Pig," or, royally plural, "Little Pigs," especially when these letters took the tone of confessions; as, for instance, from Keswick, in 1857:—

WHEN little pigs have muffins hot
And take three-quarters for their lot,
Then, little pigs—had better not.

And again, on the occasion of over-lunching myself before ascending Red Pike in the same year:—

As readers, for their minds' relief,
Will sometimes double down a leaf,
Or rather, as good sailors reef
Their sails, or jugglers, past belief,
Will con-involve a handkerchief—
If little pigs, when time is brief,
Will, that way, double up their beef,
Then, little pigs will come to grief.

And here is a pretty and pathetic Pigwiggian chaunt, from Abbeville, in 1858:—

If little pigs,—when evening dapples,
With fading cloud, her autumn sky,—

* [The Boar's head.]

Set out in search of Norman chapels,
And find, instead, where cliffs are high,
Half-way from Amiens to Etaples,
A castle, full of pears and apples,
On donjon floors laid out to dry;
—Green jargonelles, and apples tenny,—
And find their price is five a penny,
If little pigs, then, buy too many,
Spare to those little pigs a sigh.

(*Præterita*, II. viii.)

AWAKE, AWAKE.

AWAKE! awake! the stars are pale, the east is russet gray:
They fade, behold the phantoms fade, that kept the gates of Day;
Throw wide the burning valves, and let the golden streets be free,
The morning watch is past—the watch of evening shall not be.

Put off, put off your mail, ye kings, and beat your brands to dust:
A surer grasp your hands must know, your hearts a better trust;
Nay, bend aback the lance's point, and break the helmet bar,—
A noise is on the morning winds, but not the noise of war!

Among the grassy mountain paths the glittering troops increase:
They come! they come!—how fair their feet—they come that publish peace!

Yea, Victory! fair Victory! our enemies' and ours,
And all the clouds are clasped in light, and all the earth
with flowers.

Ah! still depressed and dim with dew, but yet a little
while,
And radiant with the deathless rose the wilderness shall
smile,
And every tender living thing shall feed by streams of
rest,
Nor lamb shall from the fold be lost, nor nursling from
the nest.

For aye, the time of wrath is past, and near the time of
rest,
And honour binds the brow of man, and faithfulness his
breast,—
Behold, the time of wrath is past, and righteousness
shall be,
And the Wolf is dead in Arcady, and the Dragon in the
sea!

[*About* 1865.]

"TWIST YE, TWINE YE."

TWIST ye, twine ye; even so
Mingle shades of Joy and Woe,
Hope and Fear, and Peace and Strife,
In the thread of human life.

While the mystic twist is spinning,
And the infant's life beginning,
Dimly seen through twilight bending,
Lo! what varied shapes attending!

Passion's force, by Patience knit;
Doubtful Reason reined by Wit;
Toil,—forgot in sighing Rest,
Joy,—we know not which is best.

Earnest Gladness, idle Fretting,
Foolish Memory, wise Forgetting;
And trusted reeds, that broken lie,
Wreathed again for melody.

Ah! the deep, the tender playing,
Worded Silence, unmeant Saying,

Ah! sweet Anger, insincere,
Trembling Kiss, and glittering Tear.

Vanished Truth, but Vision staying;
Fairy riches—lost in weighing;
And fitful grasp of flying Fate,
Touched too lightly, traced too late.

Graceful Pride, and timid Praise,
Love, diffused a thousand ways;
Faithful Hope, and generous Fear,
In the mystic dance appear.

Now they wax and now they dwindle,
Whirling with the whirling spindle:—
Twist ye, twine ye,—even so
Mingle human bliss and woe.

[*About* 1865.]

RHYMES TO MUSIC

I. "JOANNA'S CARE."

WHAT shall we say to her,
Now she is here?—
Don't go away again,
Joanie, my dear!

[1880.]

II. THE SONG IN THE QUEEN'S PARLOUR.

[A RHYME FOR "ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOLS."]

OUNCE of comb in Saxon hive,
Count it ten times forty-five:
Pound of grain in Saxon store,
Count it hundreds fifty-four.
Count ye true in Saxon tower
Pound by ounce, and day by hour.

[1880.]

III. THE SONG OF THE QUEEN'S GARDEN.

NAUSICAA.

THE King was in his counting-house
Counting out his money:

The Queen was in the—garden
Giving bread and honey.

The maid along the beach to bleach
Was laying out the linen;
At home, her handmaids, each to each,
Had a dainty room to spin in.

[1881.]

IV. TRUST THOU THY LOVE.

TRUST thou thy Love: if she be proud, is she not sweet?
Trust thou thy Love: if she be mute, is she not pure?
Lay thou thy soul full in her hands, low at her feet;—
Fail, Sun and Breath!—yet, for thy peace, *she* shall endure.

[1881.]

ADDITIONAL STANZAS TO "DAME WIGGINS OF LEE."

"I have spoken in 'Fors' (vol. v. pp. 37-38) of the meritorious rhythmic cadence of the verses, not, in its way, easily imitable. In the old book, no account is given of what the cats learned when they went to school, and I thought my younger readers might be glad of some notice of such particulars." (Preface to Reprint of "Dame Wiggins," dated 4th October 1885.)

THE Master soon wrote
That they all of them knew
How to read the word "milk"
And to spell the word "mew."
And they all washed their faces
Before they took tea:
"Were there ever such dears!"
Said Dame Wiggins of Lee.

He had also thought well
To comply with their wish
To spend all their play-time
In learning to fish
For stitlings; they sent her
A present of three,

Which, fried, were a feast
For Dame Wiggins of Lee.

When spring-time came back
They had breakfast of curds ;
And were greatly afraid
Of disturbing the birds.
" If you sit, like good cats,
All the seven in a tree,
They will teach you to sing ! "
Said Dame Wiggins of Lee.

So they sat in a tree,
And said " Beautiful ! Hark ! "
And they listened and looked
In the clouds for the lark.
Then sang, by the fireside,
Symphonious-ly,
A song without words
To Dame Wiggins of Lee.

[THE PULPIT.]

The hackneyed couplet of Hudibras respecting clerical use of the fist on the pulpit-cushion is scarcely understood by modern readers, because of the burlesqued rhythm leaning falsely on the vowel :—

"THE pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,
Is beat with fist instead of *a* stick."

The couplet, like most of the poem, has been kept in memory more by the humour of its manner than the truth of its wit. I should like myself to expand it into—

The pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,
Keeps time to truth politely plastic,
And wakes the Dead, and lulls the Quick,
As with a death's-head on a stick.

Or, in the longer rhythm of my old diary—

Who, despots of the ecclesiastic drum,
Roll the rogues' muffled march, to the rogues' "kingdom come."

(1886.) (*Præterita*, II. viii.)

RHYMES FOR MUSIC.

V. [NURSERY DRILL.]

LET the little ones run,
But let the wise ones walk,—
Steady as steps the sun,
Straight as a barley-stalk.
And when all is nicely done,
We shall have time to talk.

[1886.]

VI. [TENNIS INTERRUPTED.]

IN the Isle of Skye
The girls are shy;
And out of tune
By the Crook of Lune.
And they can't tell why,
But the balls go awry;
And they can't play tennis—
Neither Aggies nor Clennies—
With "the Stones of Venice"
A-standin' by!

[1886.]

VII. [RED-RIDING-HOOD.]

FAR through all the pathless wild-wood
Wintry shades of evening close;
But, as still that mountain-child could,
Libby led the way for Rose.

Running, leaping, skipping, sliding—
Only no one understood
What she had to do with riding,
Or why called Red-Riding-Hood!

[1886.]

VIII. [TEA IN THE SCHOOL-ROOM.]

DRAW the curtains tight, Babette;
Stir the embers bright, Babette:
Poor Fifine is cold and wet,
And sadly wants her tea:
—Poor Fifine, the sweet, the sweet!—
What have we got that's nice to eat?
—Warm her hands, and toast her feet,
And then, and then,—we'll see!

[1886.]

IX. ST. PETER.

["The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."]

ST. PETER went to fish,
When sprats were twopence a dish:

But St. Peter went to preach,
When sprats were twopence each.

[1887.]

X. [THE ANSWER, TO BABY.]

FISHES in the sea,—
Apples on the tree,—
What is it to me,
Baby, whose they be ?

[*April* 21, 1887.]

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA; 1836–1845.

1836; John Ruskin, 17 years of age on *Feb.* 8: living at Herne Hill. Visit of the Domecqs (*Jan.*) occasioned first love-poems,—"Leoni," "Jacqueline," "Adèle, by Moonlight;" and after their departure, "Last Smile," "Good-night," "Swiss Maiden's Song," "Alpine-Glow," "Iris," "Alpine Lake," "Evening in Company," "On Adèle" (*Feb.–May*). Began to study Shelley; received eight or nine lessons in water-colour from Copley Fielding. Attended lectures of Rev. T. Dale on English Literature (and others on Classics) at King's College. "Letter to his Father" (*March* 31), "Birthday Address" (*May* 10). Visited Richmond for a week in *July*, and wrote "Nature Untenanted." At Herne Hill (*Summer*) wrote "Marcolini," and papers published in Loudon's *Mag. of Natural Science* "On the Induration of Sandstone" (*July* 25) and "On the Temperature of Water" (*Sept.* 2). Wrote defence of Turner's "Juliet," &c., in answer to *Blackwood* (early in *October*). To Oxford (*Oct.* 17); matriculated next day as gentleman-commoner of Christ Church. Thence to Southampton and the South Coast; returning to Herne Hill within a fortnight; whence he wrote "Letter to R. Fall" (about *Oct.* 29). He also published in "Friendship's Offering" for 1836 "The Months," written in 1834.

1837; age 18. Went into residence in Peckwater Quad., Ch. Ch., Oxford (*Jan.* 14). Sent in "The Gipsies" for the

Newdigate prize (*March* 31). Returned to Herne Hill (*June*); went for summer tour with his family (*June* 21) to the English Lakes; ascended Scafell and Helvellyn; at Ambleside, *July* 31; through Yorkshire, where he drew Bolton Abbey (*Aug.* 15), by Ashby de la Zouche (*Aug.* 21), to Peterborough and Lichfield Cathedrals, returning to Herne Hill (about *Sept.*). During the tour he began "Poetry of Architecture," which was published monthly from *Nov.* 1837 till *Dec.* 1838 in Loudon's *Architectural Magazine.* At Oxford from *Oct.* 13 till *December.* Began controversy in Loudon's *Arch. Mag.* on Parsey's mathematical theories (*Nov.* 17, 1837, *March* 5, *May* 1, and *Sept.* 5, 1838). Published "Last Smile" and "Leoni" in "Friendship's Offering" for 1837.

1838; age 19. To Oxford in *January.* Sent in "Exile of St. Helena" for Newdigate (*March* 31); returned to Herne Hill (middle of *June*), and wrote "Comparative Advantages of Music and Painting." Tour with his family, *July* 3, to Yorkshire, English Lakes, Scottish Highlands, and neighbourhood of Edinburgh, returning by way of Chelmsford to visit the Domecqs, at school there, and reaching Herne Hill *Sept.* 3. To Oxford (*Oct.–Dec.*); wrote paper "The Propriety of Combining Works of Art with the Sublimity of Nature" (*Oct.* 20), published in Loudon's *Arch. Mag.*, *Jan.* 1839. Published in "Friendship's Offering" for 1838 "Scythian Grave," "Remembrance," "Christ Church, Oxford." Visit of the Domecqs to Herne Hill, four or five weeks at Christmas.

1839; age 20. To Oxford in *January.* Published in the *London Monthly Miscellany* for *Jan.* two "Songs" and "Iter ad Brundusium;" in *ditto* for *Feb.*, "Memory" and "The Name:" *ditto* for *March*, two "Canzonets," "Mirror," and

"Meteorological Fragment;" *ditto* for *April*, "Song of Tyrolese." Sent in "Salsette" for Newdigate (*March* 31), and recited successful poem at Commem. (*June* 12). Returned to Herne Hill (*June* 15). Tour with his family to Cheddar, Devon, Cornwall. In *Sept.* at Herne Hill, read with Osborne Gordon. Turner's "Gosport" bought. Negotiations for the marriage of Mdlle. Domecq begun; wrote "Farewell." Returned to Oxford (*Oct.* 8); first symptoms of illness (*Oct.* 14). Published in "Friendship's Offering" for 1839 "Scythian Banquet" and "Aristodemus;" in "The Amaranth," 1839, "The Recreant" and "The Wreck," and in *Trans. Met. Soc.* "Meteorology."

1840; age 21. To Oxford (*Jan.*), into lodgings in St. Aldate's. Came of age *Feb.* 8, and received from his father Turner's "Winchelsea." Bought Turner's "Harlech" (in Easter vacation). Threatened with consumption (early in *May*); returned to Herne Hill; introduced to Turner (*June* 22). Published in "Friendship's Offering" for 1840 "Scythian Guest," "Broken Chain," Parts I. and II., and "To Adèle." Left England (*Sept.* 25) with his family, and travelled by Rouen, Blois, Amboise, and the Loire, Auvergne (*Oct.*), Genoa (*Oct.* 31), and made first visit to Central and South Italy—Lucca, Pisa (*Nov.* 9), Florence, Siena, reaching Rome (*Nov.* 28), where he met G. Richmond and J. Severn; and was ill of a fever during the last week of the year.

1841; age 22. At Rome till *Jan.* 6; La Riccia, where he saw the scene in "M. P." I. p. 152. Naples and neighbourhood from *Jan.* 9 till *March* 17. Wrote letter (*Feb.* 7) on landslip near Giagnano for Ashmolean Society. After leaving Naples, symptoms of illness returned. At Rome *March* 22–*April* 18; to Florence, Bologna (*May* 1), Venice, and

North Italy, returning by Mont Cenis to Lans-le-bourg (*June* 1) and Geneva. Recovered strength among the Alps, and on *June* 6 resolved to do some important work—a resolve issuing in "Modern Painters." Went home by Lausanne, Neuchâtel, Basle, Rheims, Rochester (*June* 29). In *August* started for a tour in Wales with R. Fall, but from Pont-y-Monach returned (*Sept.* 2) to Leamington, where in six weeks he was cured of a relapse into consumptive symptoms; and illustrated Part V. of "Broken Chain" and wrote part of "King of Golden River." To Wandlebury (*Oct.* 22) and Herne Hill, where he read with Osborne Gordon for his degree, and took lessons in drawing from J. D. Harding. Published in "Friendship's Offering" for 1841 "Broken Chain," Part III., "Psammenitus," "Two Paths," "Water-wheel," "Farewell," "Departed Light," and "Agonia."

1842; age 23. At Herne Hill. In *May* first study of natural grouping, the ivy at Tulse Hill. Returned to Oxford, and passed Final Exams., gaining honorary double fourth (*May–June*). Saw Turner's Swiss sketches and Splügen drawing in the new "Impressionist" manner, and Richmond showed him the excellence of Venetian colour. Tour with his family (from *May* 14) by Dover, Abbeville, Fontainebleau (where he made the naturalistic study of Aspen), Chartres, Morez, Geneva (studying botany and geology), Berne, Schaffhausen, Coblentz; and at Cologne, St. Quentin, Antwerp, and Bruges made the last drawings in the Proutesque manner; reached London *Aug.* 19. At Herne Hill through the winter wrote "Modern Painters," vol. I. Published in "Friendship's Offering" for 1842 "Broken Chain," Part IV., "Arion," and "Carrara."

1843; age 24. His family removed from Herne Hill to Denmark Hill. He bought Turner's "Goldau" and "Dazio

Grande." Kept summer term at Oxford (*April–June*). Published "Modern Painters" (*May*); in *Sept.* wrote reply to critics, *Weekly Chronicle* (*Sept.* 23). To Oxford; took M.A. degree (*Oct.* 28). Wrote "Art Criticism" in *Artist's and Amateur's Magazine* (*Dec.*). Published "Broken Chain," Part V., with plate of Amboise, in "Friendship's Offering" 1843.

1844; age 25. At Denmark Hill, on New Year's Day received Turner's "Slave-Ship" from his father. Wrote on "Reflections in Water" (*Jan.*) in *Artist's and Amateur's Magazine*. Tour with his family (from *May* 14) by Dover, Abbeville, Auxerre, Geneva (*June*), Chamouni (first Alpine climbing with Couttet, and study of geology for "Modern Painters," vol. iv.). Brieg (drew panorama of Alps, now in Sheffield Museum), Simplon (met J. D. Forbes), Baveno, Zermatt, Vevey, Champagnole, Paris (studying Titian, John Bellini, and Perugino in the Louvre, *Aug* 17 and 18), Amiens, London (*Aug.* 24). Published in "Friendship's Offering" for 1844 "Montenotte," with illustration, and "Walk in Chamouni," with illustration. On *Dec.* 12, to Hastings.

1845; age 26. At Hastings till *Jan.* 10. At Denmark Hill studied Turner's "Liber Studiorum," Lord Lindsay and Rio on Early Christian Art, and determined to see more of Italian painting before proceeding with "Modern Painters." First tour alone, taking only a servant, and meeting his guide Couttet, at Geneva (*April*). Wrote "Mont Blanc Revisited" at Nyon or Geneva in April, or at Pisa (*June* 9). At Conflans wrote "The Basses Alpes." Went by the Riviera to Lucca, where he studied Early Italian Architecture in S. Frediano, the painting of Fra Bartolommeo, and the sculpture of Quercia, Ilaria di Caretto. To Pisa, where he studied the Campo Santo and Spina Chapel;

and at Florence, Giotto, Ghirlandaio, and Angelico. To Macugnaga and the St. Gothard, where he made drawings for "Modern Painters." With J. D. Harding to Venice, where he studied Tintoret, obtained the first daguerreotypes of architecture, and determined to write "Stones of Venice." To Padua, fever; to Lake of Geneva; through France, threatened with diphtheria; home to Denmark Hill. Wrote "Modern Painters," vol. ii., during the winter. Published in Heath's "Book of Beauty," 1845, "The Madonna dell' Acqua;" in "The Keepsake," 1845, "The Old Seaman" and "Alps from Marengo."

In 1846 the last poems were published:—in "The Keepsake," "The Arve at Cluse" and "Mont Blanc;" in Heath's "Book of Beauty," "Lines Written in the Basses Alpes" and "The Glacier." In 1850 nearly all the pieces previously published were collected, with others, into the volume entitled "Poems. J. R." (privately printed). The poems in this book are roughly dated, ranging from *Aetat.* 14 to *Aetat.* 26,—the "*Aetat.*" meaning "at the age of," not "in the year of his life:" *e.g.*, "Mont Blanc Revisited" is dated *Aetat. 26, i.e., when he was 26 years old*,—not *in his 26th year.* Some of the poems, as "Ehrenbreitstein," "The Months," and "Farewell," are wrongly dated. The book does not seem to have been edited with any care by the author; but, in the absence of other evidence, the figures must be accepted, and taken as years, not of publication, but of composition, for which they are evidently intended. The order of "Poems. J. R." has been preserved in this edition, except where known chronology has necessitated its abandonment. This volume having become excessively scarce, selling at £40, or even £50, a pirated edition was brought out in America, containing a selection only, not always accurately reproduced, and including a

poem, "Spring," which Mr. Ruskin says he certainly did not write, beginning "Infant Spirit of the Spring," from "Friendship's Offering" for 1837, pp. 383–384, where it is signed "R.," not "J. R.," like other poems by the author in that volume.

The biographical data above noted are intended to give a clear view of Mr. Ruskin's development and career as a verse-writer, to fix the dates of his poems, and to suggest the circumstances of their production. I have to acknowledge the kind assistance of Mr. Sydney C. Cockerell in the compilation; and at the same time I must disclaim any attempt at completeness. I have not tried in these notes to follow out Mr. Ruskin's movements in detail,—his studies in science and art, and his development as a prose-writer during these busy and eventful years of his boyhood and youth. With the autumn of 1845 closed a period of twenty years of "serious" verse-writing. But though he gave up the ambition of becoming a poet, Mr. Ruskin did not entirely abandon versifying, and continued especially to write rhymed letters, of which many may possibly be extant in the possession of his friends. Another of his private studies has been musical composition, especially in his later years. From about 1880 onwards, he has been in the habit of writing short songs to fit his own tunes: some of these, though not intended for publication, I have been permitted to include, as interesting to his friends, if not to the public.

NOTES TO THE POEMS.

Note LIX. "Song from Leoni" (p. 3).—With *January* 1836 a new period begins in Mr. Ruskin's poetical work. The immediate cause of the change was his first love-affair, an unrequited attachment to the daughter of his father's Spanish partner. The whole story is told with the frankness of an early reminiscence in Præt. I. x. pp. 319–320, 326–338, and xii. pp. 420–424. Mdlle. Adèle Clotilde Domecq, with her three younger sisters, came on a few weeks' visit to Herne Hill, probably in *January* 1836; and the young poet fell in love with her. He says, "I dared not address any sonnets straight to herself. I wrote with great pains, and straining of my invention, a story about Naples (which I had never seen), and 'the Bandit Leoni,' whom I represented as typical of what my own sanguinary and adventurous disposition would have been had I been brought up a bandit; and 'the Maiden Giulietta,' in whom I portrayed all the perfections of my mistress. Our connection with Messrs. Smith & Elder enabled me to get this story printed in 'Friendship's Offering'"—for 1837, where the song of the Bandit serenading Giulietta under the walls of her father's castle occupies pp. 220–221. The poem was reprinted in "Poems. J. R.," p. 45: American edition. p. 10. The whole story was reprinted privately in 1868.

Note LX. "On Adèle, by Moonlight" (p. 6).—Probably written during the visit of the Domecqs in *Jan.–Feb.* 1836; not in Notebook No. VIII., which contains the other poems of this time. In "Poems. J. R.," p. 22.

Note LXI. "The Last Smile" (p. 7).—Written, or supposed to be written, on the day after Mdlle. Domecq's departure. In "Friendship's Offering," 1837, p. 102; "Poems. J. R.," p. 25., marked *Aetat.* 17, meaning *aged* 17, *i.e.*, after *Feb.* 8, 1836; American edition, p. 9; "The Painter Poets," ed. Kineton Parkes, 1890, p. 185. Two alterations were introduced in "F. O.," probably by the editor, W. H. Harrison, as the original MS. reads as in "Poems. J. R.," and Mr. Harrison is mentioned as emending the author's verses for publication. This does not apply to "Andernach," &c., published before 1836, in which year Mr. Pringle having died, Mr. Harrison became editor. The changes are: line 2, where "F. O." reads "so *blandly* smiling," and line 4, where it reads "so *sweetly my lorn heart* beguiling." Mr. Kineton Parkes follows "F. O.," but misprints, line 1, "yesterday" for "yesternight."

Note LXII. "Good-Night" (p. 8).—This I place after "The Last Smile," as it evidently refers to a later time, though it occurs before "The Last Smile" in the Notebook No. VIII. and "Poems. J. R.," where it was first printed, pp. 20, 21, and marked *Aetat.* 16; *i.e.* before *Feb.* 8. It was not by any means the author's invariable practice to write poems at the actual time when they were suggested; and "The Last Smile" may have been written many days after the "yesternight" whose events it narrates.

Note LXIII. "Letter" (p. 14).—From the original, an old-fashioned sheet without envelope, post-marked (31 MR. 1836); in No. X. Probably only one of a series of rhyming letters, as the postscript says, "You have absolutely let me send you nine sheets, and without any answer;" and his mother, crossing his writing with pencil, mentions a specially interesting letter of her son's sent to Nottingham,—Mr. J. J. Ruskin being away on business, travelling about, and no doubt too busy to answer.

"You, father, feel the yearning deep" (p. 16),—compare vol. i. p. 253, and Note LVIII. "Mr. Dale" (p. 17),—the Rev. Thomas Dale, Rector of St. Bride's, Fleet Street, had been the author's schoolmaster from 1833. See Præt. I. iv. pp. 131–133. "Dash" (p. 19),—see vol. i. p. 38, and Note X. "Herne Hill almond blossom" (p. 19),—compare Præt. I. ii. p. 73,—"the first joy of the year being in its snowdrops, the second, and cardinal one, was in the almond blossom; . . . and for many and many a year to come,—until, indeed, the whole of life became autumn to me,—my chief prayer for the kindness of Heaven, in its flowerful seasons, was that the frost might not touch the almond blossom."

Note LXIV. "Congratu—" (p. 22).—Stanza 2, last line, "Had not the smallest *idea*." Mr. Ruskin always accents it so, as in reading Greek. Stanza 7, last line (p. 24), "*decimated* Mays" is a pun on the *tenth* of May, his father's birthday.

Note LXV. "Nature untenanted" (p. 29).—Written during a short visit to Richmond in July. Compare Præt. I. x. p. 334, in which he speaks of his "real depth of feeling, and (note it well, good reader) a true and glorious sense of the newly revealed miracle of human love, in its exaltation of the physical beauty of the world;" and see the poem "The Departed Light."

Note LXVI. "Marcolini" (p. 32).—"I set myself in my 17th year [*i.e.* 1836, aged 17] in a state of majestic imbecility, to write a tragedy on a Venetian subject, in which the sorrows of my soul were to be enshrined in immortal verse,—the fair heroine, Bianca, was to be endowed with the perfections of Desdemona and the brightness of Juliet,—and Venice and Love were to be described as never had been thought of before. . . . I remember nothing more of that year [*i.e.* Summer] 1836, than sitting under the mulberry tree in the back-garden, writing my tragedy" (Præt.

I. x. pp. 334–335). He says farther that the tragedy was "given up, because, when I had described a gondola, a bravo, the heroine Bianca, and moonlight on the Grand Canal, I found I had not much more to say" (Præt. I. xii. p. 410). Hardly a fair account of the play, which, had it been completed, would not have disgraced him. It is called "the best" of his poems of this period in "Stones of Venice," iii. C. F. 2; but in its unfinished condition, and after his sarcastic allusions, it is obvious that the author would not desire to see it printed. It was not want of power so much as dissipation of energy that prevented his carrying out the work, see Biographical Data for 1836.

Note LXVII. "Mont Blanc" (p. 34).—From "Iteriad" Notebook No. VII., where it occurs among work of this year, but undated. Evidently no part of the 1833 tour, though in the same metre. The later part, from "A few light flakes" to the end, is supplied from a loose sheet.

Note LXVIII. "Rhyming Letter" (p. 36).—Written "a fortnight almost gone," since he went to Oxford, *Oct.* 17, therefore probably about *Oct.* 29, at Herne Hill. His matriculation is described also in Præt. I. x. pp. 342–344. Richard Fall started with the author on a tour in Wales, *August* 1841, but parted at Pont-y-Monach owing to the author's illness (Præt. II. iv. pp. 107–109). They were together in *May* 1849 at Vevey and Chamouni. R. Fall afterwards went on the Stock Exchange, married, became wealthy, and died, aged upwards of fifty, in 187– (Præt. II. xi. pp. 387–391).

Note LXIX. "The Gipsies" (p. 43).—Offered for the Newdigate, for which the usual day of sending in is *March* 31. The prize was won by A. P. Stanley, Christ Church, afterwards Dean of Westminster, but Mr. Ruskin says this poem "ran him close." In the motto, the author alters Horace from *agat* to *agant*, but

without changing the mood of the verb. On p. 52, three lines from bottom, "Poems. J. R." (where it is first printed on pp. 26–44), reads, "O Death, how dread thy sting when not to be! Is the last hope, whose coldness can control," &c. It is worth remarking that the author's religion and moral tone were already more powerful than his romanticism; so that he does not draw upon reminiscences of Scott's descriptions of Gipsy freedom, but anticipates his own doctrines,—*e.g.* in "Seven Lamps," chapter vii. and note,—"that treacherous phantom which men call Liberty,"—"not Liberty, but Law." The concluding couplet paraphrases "Whose service is perfect freedom" and "My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Note LXX. "Scythian Grave" (p. 61).—In "Friendship's Offering," 1838, pp. 116–118; "Poems. J. R," pp. 46–48; Amer. edit. pp. 13–16. In the prefatory note the American editor changes the ironical "*very elegant* and affecting customs" into "*peculiar* and affecting," &c., not grasping the light and sarcastic style of all these prefatory notes,—a survival of the humorous strand of thought which everywhere entertwines with the sentimental, as in the "Iteriad,"—in the 1833 Tour, where it appears in the prose paragraphs of the original, and in the 1835 Tour, where it comes in as the "Don Juan manner, artfully combined with that of Childe Harold." This feeling was one of the things which could not be expressed in the sentimental style which the author finally adopted in his "serious" verse-writing, and it contributed to make him abandon poetry. The footnote (p. 61) refers to Ezekiel xxxii. 27, which speaks of "Meshech and Tubal," the Muskai and Tuplai of Assyrian inscriptions, Moschi and Tibareni of classic history,—not Scythians, according to Herodotus, though mentioned in his Book III. chap. 94 as tribes bordering on the Euxine. Mr. Ruskin says, "When I went to Oxford, I was put by my tutor into Herodotus, out of whom I immediately gathered materials

enough to write my Scythian drinking-song [Banquet], in imitation of the 'Giaour'" (Præt. I. x. p. 336). It is possible that the "Scythian Banquet Song" as well as the "Scythian Grave" may have been written in 1837, and that all the Herodotean poems, viz, these two, with the "Scythian Guest," "Recreant," "Aristodemus," "Psammenitus," and "Arion," may have been thought out much earlier than the dates assigned them in "Poems. J. R."

Note LXXI. "Remembrance" (p. 64).—In "Friendship's Offering," 1838, pp. 119–120, where stanza 2, line 4, reads, "I am alone, *when I'm* parted from thee," as at the time it was not desirable to publish the lady's name. In "Poems. J. R.," pp. 49–50; American edition, pp. 17–18.

Note LXXII. "Christ Church, Oxford" (p. 66).—Stanzas 1, 3, and 4 in "Friendship's Offering," 1838, pp. 287–288. In "Poems. J. R.," pp. 51–52, with stanza 2 added at the end, under heading "Second verse in MS." In American edition, pp. 19–20; and in "Painter Poets" (see note LXI.), p. 186, as in "F. O."

Note LXXIII. "Exile of St. Helena" (p. 71).—Sent in for Newdigate *March* 31. "At Mr. Dale's [school in 1834] were also two senior pupils, little known to me, except Henry Dart by his large hazel eyes, and Edmund Oldfield by his already almost middle-aged aspect of serene sagacity. When I went to Oxford, I found Dart at Exeter College, where we established poetical friendship, and contended in all honour for the Newdigate, reading our best passages to each other for improving censure. Dart, very deservedly, won it that year, and gave promise of generous distinction afterwards; but the hazel eyes were too bright, and closed, in a year or two, to this world's ambition" (Præt. II. viii. p. 269). On p. 78, "Cervin's *purple*

snows" at "noontide" perhaps alludes to the Z'Mutt glacier, or Red Glacier, as "Modern Painters" (vol. iv. ch. 16, § 13) prefers to call it,—"covered with blocks of reddish gneiss." "Scrivia" is an affluent of the Po, near Marengo, whose "passage" was one of the first successes of the Napoleonic arms in Italy. "Her guard in battle, and in peace her guide" (p. 83, line 14):—Lord Melbourne was then Prime Minister, but the Duke of Wellington was looked up to as veteran leader of the Tories, to which party Mr. Ruskin and his father belonged (Præt. I. i. p. 1). In "Poems. J. R.," pp. 53–66.

Note LXXIV. "The Recreant" (p. 85).—Second of the Herodotean poems. In "The Amaranth," 1839, pp, 56–57; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 67–68.

Note LXXV. "The Wreck" (p. 87).—In "The Amaranth," 1839, p. 90; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 69–70; "John Ruskin, a Bibliographical Biography," by W. E. A. Axon, 1879, p. 5 (2nd edit. 1881, p. 7); "Papers of the Manchester Literary Club," vol. v., 1879, p. 157.

Note LXXVI. "Aristodemus" (p. 89).—Third of the Herodotean poems: the story is told in Herodotus, vii. 229–231, and ix. 71. This poem is in "Friendship's Offering," 1839, pp. 140–142; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 71–73, where stanza 4, line 1, runs "What, said I, alas! though the foe in his flight." American edition, pp. 21–23.

Note LXXVII. "Song. We care not what skies" (p. 92).—Probably written before *Aug.* 1838, as one of the later poems to Adèle in her absence (*Feb.* 1836–*Aug.* 1838), along with "Though thou hast not a feeling for one," and "Memory." In the *London Monthly Miscellany*, vol. i. No. 6, *Jan.* 1839, p. 486; and "Poems. J. R.," pp. 87–88.

Note LXXVIII. "Song. Though thou hast not a feeling for one" (p. 94). See note LXXVII. Printed with preceding poem, p. 491; and "Poems. J. R.," pp. 89–90.

Note LXXIX. "Iter ad Brundusium" (p. 96).—A loose paraphrase of Horace, Sat. I. v., lines 13–24. Printed with preceding poem, p. 500; and "Poems. J. R.," p. 91.

Note LXXX. "Memory" (p. 97).—See Note LXXVII. This is the last in date of the poems in Notebook No. VIII. Published in the *London Monthly Miscellany*, vol. i. No. 7, *Feb.* 1839, p. 536; and "Poems. J. R.," pp. 92–93.

Note LXXXI. "The Name" (p. 99).—Compare "Evening in Company" (p. 25 above). Published with preceding poem, pp. 558–559; in "Poems. J. R.," pp. 94–96.

Note LXXXII. "Canzonet. The winter's chill" (p. 102).—Probably written *December* 1838, in anticipation of Mdlle. Domecq's second visit to Herne Hill. In the *London Monthly Miscellany*, vol. i. No. 8, *March* 1839, p. 604; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 97–98.

Note LXXXIII. "Fragment," &c. (p. 104).—Probably written at Herne Hill in *Dec.* 1838. Published with preceding poem, p. 624; in "Poems. J. R.," pp. 99–100.

Note LXXXIV. "Canzonet. There's a change in the green of the leaf" (p. 106).—Perhaps written *Dec.* 1838: see Note LXXXII. Published with preceding poem, p. 635; in "Poems. J. R.," p. 101.

Note LXXXV. "The Mirror" (p. 107).—Another poem to Adèle in absence. Published with preceding three poems, p. 653; in "Poems. J. R.," pp. 102–103.

Note LXXXVI. "Song of the Tyrolese" (p. 109).—In the *London Monthly Miscellany*, vol. i. No. 9, *April* 1839, p. 739; in "Poems. J. R.," pp. 104–105, where line 2 reads, "After rush of battle's holy;" and line 8, "But there's pride in the gasp of our conqueror's breath."

Note LXXXVII. "Scythian Banquet" (p. 111).—Fourth of the Herodotean poems. In "Friendship's Offering," 1839, pp. 25–39. The editor of "F. O." in his preface for 1840 refers to the author as one of "the gifted writers to whose valuable aid success is attributable," and mentions that this poem was "largely quoted by the periodicals of the time." The author in "Stones of Venice" (vol. iii. C. F. 2) calls it "a doggerel in imitation of the 'Giaour;'" and says it "made my unwise friends radiantly happy in the thought that I should certainly be a poet, and as exquisitely miserable at the first praises of then clear-dawning Tennyson." In stanza 1, line 11, "F. O." misreads "*finger*" for "*fingers*." Republished in "The English Helicon," 1841, pp. 276–287. Printed in "Poems. J. R.," pp. 106–120; American edition, pp. 41–61.

Note LXXXVIII. "Salsette" (p. 129).—Finished before *March* 31, 1839. Recited at Commemoration, *June* 12; published in pamphlet form by J. Vincent, Oxford, 1839; in "Oxford Prize Poems," 1839; reprinted in "Poems. J. R.," pp. 74–86; in pamphlet form by G. Allen, *Dec.* 1879; in American edition, pp. 24–40. On p. 138 of this edition, lines 2 and 6 read in the first edition and in "Poems. J. R.," as I have given them: other editions read "*The* measured steps," &c., and "Deep echoes from the *couch* of sacrifice." In this last, Mr. Wise (Bibliography of John Ruskin, Part I. p. 5) remarks *conch* as an "obvious printer's error;" but it was probably the author's intention, referring to the conch-shell, *Sankha*, blown at sacrificial rites (figured in Sir G. Birdwood's "Industrial Arts of India," Part I.

Plate N.). And in the former case "Their" is certainly the right reading.

Note LXXXIX. "Scythian Guest" (p. 142).—Fifth of the Herodotean poems. See Note LXX. In "Friendship's Offering," 1840, pp. 52–60; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 121–130; American edition, pp. 62–74.

Note XC. "Farewell" (p. 151).—In "Friendship's Offering," 1841, pp. 168–180, signed "Μονότροπος, *September* 1839." In "Poems. J. R.," pp. 221–235, dated *Aetat.* 21, which is a mistake, and throws a doubt on the dates of "To Adèle," "The Departed Light," and "Agonia," as these four poems refer to the last period of his attachment to Mdlle. Domecq, when negotiations were going on for her marriage to another. Probably "To Adèle" was written early in 1839, and "The Departed Light" and "Agonia" in the early part of 1840; but, in the absence of definite dates, I put them as in "Poems. J. R."

Note XCI. "The Broken Chain" (p. 166).—Parts I. and II. are dated in "Poems. J. R.," *Aetat.* 20; Part III. *Aetat.* 21; Part IV. *Aetat.* 22; Part V. *Aetat.* 23; *i.e.* the first two parts were written in 1839, the 3rd in 1840, the fourth in 1841, and the fifth in 1842. But in Præt. II. iv. pp. 113–114 the author mentions his drawing the illustration to Part. V. in Sept. 1841 at Leamington,—perhaps in advance of writing the text: still it is possible the poem may have been completed before 1842. Parts I. and II. were published in "Friendship's Offering," 1840, pp. 137–154; Part III. in "F. O." 1841, pp. 311–319; Part IV. in "F. O." 1842, pp. 359–374; Part V. with illustration of Amboise (reproduced in the large edition of this work) in "F. O." 1843, pp. 61–85. In "Poems. J. R." pp. 131–202, without the plate, but retaining note referring to it,

—another proof that the author took little interest in that reprint. The Chapel of St. Hubert (Part V. stanza xiv.) has additional interest to the traveller as the burial-place of Leonardo da Vinci.

Note XCII. "To Adèle" (p. 239).—See Note XC. Published in "Friendship's Offering," 1840, pp. 244–248, entitled "To * * *" and signed "ϱ." In "Poems. J. R.," pp. 203–207, entitled "To Adèle."

Note XCIII. "Psammenitus" (p. 244).—Sixth of the Herodotean poems. The story is from Herodotus, iii. 14. In "Friendship's Offering," 1841, pp. 37–45, with engraving, "Temple at Luxor," painted by T. C. Dibdin, engraved by J. H. Kernot; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 208–216; "The Home Story-Book in Prose and Verse," 1851, and in American edition, pp. 169–180.

Note XCIV. "The Two Paths" (p. 253).—Written for a picture of a lady teaching a boy to pray;—"Morning Devotion;" painted by G. Smyth, engraved by F. Bacon, in "Friendship's Offering," 1841, where the poem occupies pp. 73–74; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 217–218; "Home Story-Book," &c., and American edition, pp. 181–183.

Note XCV. "The Old Water-Wheel" (p. 255).—"Friendship's Offering," 1841, pp. 107–108, signed "K. Φ." *i.e.* *κατὰ φῦσιν*, his *nom-de-plume* in writing "The Poetry of Architecture," *according to nature*,—"equally expressive of the temper in which I was to discourse alike on that and every other subject" (Præt. I. xii. p. 413). Reprinted in "The English Helicon," 1841, pp. 56–57; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 219–220; "Life and Teaching of John Ruskin," by J. Marshall Mather, 1883, p. 28 (2nd edit., 1884, p. 30); and American edition, pp. 184–185.

Note XCVI. "The Departed Light; (p. 257).—Written for a picture "View in the Campagna near Rome," drawn by W. Crouch, engraved by S. Fisher, in "Friendship's Offering," 1841, where the poem occupies pp. 217–218, signed "*g.*" "Poems. J. R.," pp. 236–237; American edition, pp. 186–187.

Note XCVII. "Agonia" (p. 259).—Last of the poems on Adèle. In "Friendship's Offering," 1841, p. 288, signed "* * *". "Poems. J. R.," p. 238; American edition, pp. 188–189.

Note XCVIII. "Arion" (p. 263).—Last of the Herodotean poems; the story is from Herodotus, i. 23–24. In "Friendship's Offering," 1842, pp. 48–56, signed like all subsequent poems in magazines, "J. R. *Christ Church*, Oxford." In "Poems. J. R.," pp. 239–248, where is inserted "from MS." at foot of p. 246 the passage "The lonely search of love—a lustreless eye," and notes on *Cynoseme* and *Kelcust*. American edition, pp. 190–202.

Note XCIX. "The Hills of Carrara" (p. 273).—"Friendship's Offering," 1842, pp. 178–180; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 249–251; "The Painter Poets," ed. K. Parkes, 1890, pp. 187–189.

Note C. "Charitie" (p. 279).—Printed in "Poems. J.R.," pp. 252–254; where, in stanza 2, line 3, "death" for "dearth" is an obvious error: reprinted in "The Literary World," *April* 12, 1878, p. 234; "The Life and Teaching of John Ruskin," by J. Marshall Mather, 2nd edit. only (1884), pp. 31–32; and "J. R., a Study," by R. P. Downes, 1890, pp. 118–119.

Note CI. "Montenotte" (p. 285).—"Friendship's Offering," 1844, pp. 59–69, with plate of "Coast of Genoa," drawn by J. Ruskin, engraved by J. C. Armytage. The plate was reprinted

in *Sharp's London Journal of Entertainment and Instruction for General Readers*, vol. xv. (*circa* 1852), facing p. 288. The poem reprinted without illustration in "Poems. J. R.," pp. 255–264; American edition, pp. 206–219.

Note CII. "Walk in Chamouni" (p. 295).—"Friendship's Offering," 1844, pp. 141–144, with plate of "Glacier des Bois," drawn by J. Ruskin, engraved by J. C. Armytage. This plate also reprinted in *Sharp's London Journal*, vol. xvi. (*circa* 1852), facing p. 307. The poem reprinted without illustration in "Poems. J. R.," pp. 265–268; American edition, pp. 220–225.

Note CIII. "Madonna dell' Acqua" (p. 301).—Heath's "Book of Beauty," 1845, pp. 18–19; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 269–270.

Note CIV. "The Old Seaman" (p. 303).—"The Keepsake," 1845, pp. 63–64; "The Athenæum," 1844, No. 890, p. 1045; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 271–273; American edition, pp. 226–229.

Note CV. "The Alps from Marengo" (p. 306).—"The Keepsake," 1845, p. 270; "Poems. J. R.," p. 274; American edition, pp. 230–231.

Note CVI. "Mont Blanc Revisited" (p. 311).—"A rhyme written to Mont Blanc at Geneva, and another in vituperation of the idle people at Conflans, were, I think, the last serious exertions of my poetical powers. I perceived finally that I could express nothing I had to say, rightly, in that manner; and the 'peace of mind' which returns to me as the principal character of this opening journey (1845) was perhaps, in part, the result of this extremely wholesome conclusion" (Præt. II. vi. pp. 193–194). "These verses above noticed, with one following sonnet [*i.e.*, "Mont Blanc Revisited," "Lines Written in the Basses

Alpes," and "The Glacier"], as the last rhymes I attempted in any seriousness, were nevertheless themselves extremely earnest, and express, with more boldness and simplicity than I feel able to use now with my readers, the real temper in which I began the best work of my life [*i.e.* "Modern Painters," vol. ii., and later work]. My mother at once found fault with the words 'sanguine stain' as painful, and untrue of the rose-colour on snow at sunset; but they had their meaning to myself,—the too common Evangelical phrase, 'washed in the blood of Christ,' being, it seemed to me, if true at all, true of the earth and her purest snow, as well as of her purest creatures; and the claim of being able to find among the rock-shadows thoughts such as hermits of old found in the desert, whether it seemed immodest or not, was wholly true" (Præt. III. i. pp. 2–3). This poem was first printed in "Poems. J. R.," pp. 275–277. Reprinted in "Beautiful Poetry," 1854, vol. ii. pp. 62–63; misdated "9th *June* 1851." In "Lyra Christiana," Edinburgh (*circa* 1860), pp. 247–249. In "Hymns for the Household of Faith," London, 1861, pp. 225–226; 2nd edition 1867, pp. 529–531; 3rd edition, 1876, pp. 505–507. In Præterita, III. i. pp. 1–2 (1888) Mr. Ruskin printed a revised version, which I feel bound to follow in this edition. In "Poems. J. R." the punctuation is different; and stanza 5, line 3, reads "rejects" for "regrets;" line 4, "*That* all God's love" for "*Till* all," &c. Then follows a stanza omitted by the author in his latest recension:—

> Yet let me not, like him who trod
> In wrath, of old, the mount of God,
> Forget the thousands left;
> Lest haply, when I seek His face,
> The whirlwind of the cave replace
> The glory of the cleft.

And the last stanza begins with "But" for "Yet;" and line 4 reads "moves" for "leads." "Poems. J. R." dates this poem "9th June 1845" [when the author was at Pisa]: Præterita, III. p. 1 heads it "*Written at Nyon in* 1845:" Præt. II. p. 193 says

it was "written at Geneva." The author perhaps saw Mont Blanc for the first time on coming down to Nyon from St. Cergues one evening in April, sketched the poem at Geneva, and copied it out on *June* 9, after writing the "Basses Alpes" whose sentiment is echoed in stanza 5.

Note CVII. "The Arve at Cluse" (p. 313).—"The Keepsake," 1846, p. 234; "Poems. J. R.," p. 278.

Note CVIII. "Mont Blanc" (p. 315).—"The Keepsake," 1846, p. 35; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 279–280.

Note CIX. "Lines Written among the Basses Alpes" (p. 317). —See Note CVI. Heath's "Book of Beauty," 1846, pp. 109–110; "Poems. J. R.," pp. 281–282; American edition, pp. 232–233.

Note CX. "The Glacier" (p. 319).—See Note CVI.: though this is not a "Sonnet" in the modern sense. Heath's "Book of Beauty," 1846, p. 110; "Poems. J. R.," p. 283; American edition, p. 234.

Note CXI. "Awake, awake" (p. 328).—This and "Twist ye, Twine ye," were written for the school at Winnington, the scene of "Ethics of the Dust."

THE END.

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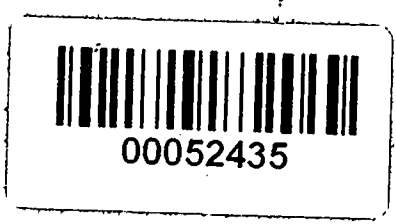

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